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Ninde:
A Grammar Sketch and Topics in Nominal Morphology

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics
at
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by
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Abstract

Ninde: A Grammar Sketch and Topics in Nominal Morphology is a linguistic description of some of the grammatical topics of the Ninde language of Southwest Bay, Malekula, Vanuatu. The data for this project was collected over a two-year period from native speakers both in New Zealand and Vanuatu. In total, 87 files consisting of traditional stories, translated school readers, process explanations and other materials were collected, of which 32 have corresponding audio files. The description gives a brief account of Ninde phonology, nouns and nominal morphology, verbs and verbal morphology and clause structure. Ninde has three main noun classes: common nouns, personal nouns and local nouns. Ninde is a head-initial language with modifiers found postnominally. Ninde possession marking is in the process of undergoing change. Verbs consist of two main classes: transitive verbs and intransitive verbs. Further, intransitive verbs contain the subclass of stative verbs. Morphologically transitive verbs can decrease valence by reduplication. There is a set of bound preverbal subject indexes that agree with the grammatical subject in person and number. In addition to the subject index, there is an additional preverbal marker which encodes the two-way future and non-future tense distinction. There are eight aspectual markers, which encode aspectual meaning such as duration, attenuation and continuation. Like many Malekula languages, Ninde is nominative/accusative with SVO word order. The analysis for this process was carried out under the framework of language typology.

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Abbreviations and Conventions

-	separate morpheme
.	separate words in a multi-word gloss or semantically complex morpheme
=	clitic
	rising intonation
Ø	3SG
1SG	first person singular
2SG	second person singular
3SG	third person singular
1DU.INCL	first person dual, inclusive
1DU.EXCL	first person dual, exclusive
2DU	second person dual
3DU	third person dual
3PL.INCL	third person plural, inclusive
3PL.EXCL	third person plural, exclusive
2PL	second person plural
3PL	third person plural
1POSS	first person direct possession suffix
2POSS	second person direct possession suffix
3POSS	third person direct possession suffix
3SG.O.INAN	third person singular inanimate object pronoun
ADJC	adjunct
ADV	adverbial marker
ANA	anaphoric reference marker
ATT	attenuative aspect
BENE	benefactor
CL	clause
CMPL	complementiser

COM	comitative
CONJ	conjunctive
CONT	continuative aspect
COP	copula
DIR	directional
DISC	discourse marker
DISC.INT	interrogative discourse marker
DIST	distal demonstrative
DUP	reduplication
DUR	durative aspect
EMPH	emphatic marker
FUT	future tense
GEN	genitive
H.GEN	human genitive
INC	inclusory
INDF	indefinite
INST	instrument marker
INTS	intensifier
k.o.	a kind of
LIM	limiter
LOC	general locative preposition
N	noun
NEG1	double negation marker 1
NEG2	double negation marker 2
NEG.EXIST	negative existential
NHUM.GEN	nonhuman genitive
NOM1	nominalisation prefix
NOM2	nominalisation suffix
NP	noun phrase
NUM	number marker

Object	object argument
OBL	oblique
PFV	perfective aspect
PL	general plural marker
PREP	preposition
PROX	proximate demonstrative
REL	relativiser
SENSE	sensory
s.o.	someone
SUB	subordinator
SUBJ	subject argument

Part One

Introduction

1 Introduction

Ninde is an Austronesian language spoken in the Southwest corner of Malekula¹ Island, Vanuatu. The name, like many other Malekula languages, literally translates to ‘what’² (Lynch and Crowley 2001, 73). The language is spoken primarily by the cultural group traditionally known as Mewun. Presently, the language is most commonly referred to as Ninde (Charpentier 1982, Lynch and Crowley 2001) or Nide, but has also been called Mewun (Deacon 1934, Gowers 1976, Wheatley 1992) and the alternatively spelt Meaun (Ray 1926), which references the cultural group from whom it originates. It is also called Labo after one of the towns in which it is spoken today (Tryon 1976).

1.1 Linguistic Background

The Oceanic nation of Vanuatu consists of some 80 islands, 65 of which are inhabited, spread over approximately 1,400 kilometres (north to south) in the South Pacific. The Y-shaped archipelago, volcanic in origin, lies less than 2,000 kilometres east of Northern Australia and 500 kilometres west of Fiji (Peace Corps 2013, 1). Its closest geographical neighbours are New Caledonia to the Southwest and Solomon Islands to the Northeast. While the exact number of languages has yet to be determined, most linguists agree that there are over 100 (Tryon 2010, 74) with at least eighty of these still actively used in Vanuatu (Lynch & Crowley 2001, 4). With a population of only 234,000 according to the most recent census (Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2009, 2), Vanuatu is the most linguistically dense nation in the world (Crowley 2004) with an average of only 2,000 speakers per language.³ All of these languages belong to the Oceanic branch of the Austronesian language family. The large majority of ni-Vanuatu are

¹ Also spelled Malakula

² While many other languages (e.g. Nahavaq (Dimock 2009), Neve’ei (Musgrave 2007), Nese (Crowley 2006)) follow this pattern, it is Dimock’s hypothesis that this naming process emerged in response to first contact with foreigners. When an outsider tried to communicate with the local group, ‘what?’ would have been the natural response to an unknown tongue. Thus, many of the languages of Malekula were named (Dimock 2009). The local term for ‘what’ is *de*, which is realised as [n^hde].

³ Density refers to the number of languages spoken per head of population.

Figure 1.1 Map of Malekula



The island of Malekula, the second largest of Vanuatu's islands, boasts a population of approximately 37,000 people (Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2009, 4) and some 30 actively-spoken languages (Lynch 2014, 1). There are two large languages on Malekula. Big Nambas/V'ënen Taut has approximately 3,500 speakers (Lynch & Crowley 2001, 63), while the largest language – Northeast Malekula – has approximately 9,000 speakers (Lynch & Crowley 2001, 80). The remaining population of 24,500 averages at 875 speakers per language, lower even than the national average (Blust 2009, 100). In addition to these, there are a number of languages which are either moribund or extinct (Lynch & Crowley 2001, 68).

Although there is great linguistic diversity on the island, the languages are poorly documented overall. Up until the 1980s, only a handful of extensive documentation and descriptions had been carried out with Malekula languages. In order of publications, these works are: Morton's (1891, 34-72) grammar sketch of Pangkumu (Southern Malekula); Ray's (1893) grammar sketch of Aulua (Eastern Malekula) and description of the geographical distribution of Malekula's languages (Ray 1926:273-283); Deacon's (1934) ethnography of Malekula, which contained wordlists and linguistic data from several languages; Tryon's (1976) survey of all the languages of Vanuatu, including Malekula; Fox's (1979) grammar of Big Nambas; Charpentier's (1979) grammar sketch of Port Sandwich (South-East Malekula) and survey of the languages of Southern Malekula (Charpentier 1982), and Clark's (1985) description of the language groups, chains and clusters in Central and Northern Vanuatu (including Malekula). According to Crowley (Lynch & Crowley 2001, 82), only the grammar sketches of Port Sandwich and Big Nambas were reasonably detailed, while the remaining accounts were 'sketchy' at best.

In the late 1990s, a trip to visit a friend in the Malekula village of Vinmavis inspired Terry Crowley, a specialist in Oceanic languages from the University of Waikato, to begin surveying the linguistic situation in Malekula. He gathered extensive data from several indigenous languages spoken in North-Central Malekula during his field trips from late 2000-October 2004 (Crowley 2006, 9). His interest spread to a small group of (then) graduate students, who carried out both documentary and descriptive linguistic work on the island ultimately leading

to a number of more detailed works on Malekula languages⁴. Despite a surge of interest, there are still several languages that lack significant documentation and description, one of which is Ninde.

Ninde is spoken in the south-western part of the island in an area known as Southwest Bay (See Figure 1.1, p. 2). This area begins just north of the area known as Seniang, and extends as far south as Hook Point and slightly into the interior of the island. Sometime after World War II, the entire population of this geographic area moved from the interior, where they had historically dwelled, down to the western coast. While some founded the village of Lawa, others joined the pre-existing villages of Labo and Wintua (Charpentier 1982, 45). Within the past 15 years, population growth, tribes shifting to their own land and other factors have contributed to the creation of four other small villages: Mahapo, Enimb, Lorlow, Lamlow. These Ninde-speaking villages are all located within Southwest Bay.

Former Southwest Bay resident and Ninde speaker Leina Isno (personal communication, January 2018) reports that on a recent trip (December 2017) to the region, Bislama was heard in daily conversations with only adults and elderly speaking Ninde. In her experience, teens and young adults were typically unable to speak the language fluently, although there is at least one school, Laindua Primary School, that conducts schooling in Ninde. In 2014, Isno visited Southwest Bay to assess the status of the seven villages that speak the language, and she was able to engage with five. The largest village Lawa is predominately Bislama-speaking, while less than half of the population is able to speak Ninde. The villages of Labo, Lorlow, Windua and Enimb only have a handful of speakers, mostly elders. While most residents predominately speak Bislama, the villages in Windua now predominately speak Nahavaq.⁵ There is a concern among the villagers in regards to Ninde “rapidly eroding and coming to extinction” since the younger generations are unable to speak the language (Isno 2015, 5). In 2003,

⁴ Projects were carried out on Aulua (Paviour-Smith 2005), Uripiv (McKerras 2005), Naman (Crowley 2006), Tape (Crowley 2006), Avava (Crowley 2006), Neve’ei (Musgrave 2007), Unua (Pearce 2007; Pearce 2010a; Pearce 2010b), Tirax (Brotchie 2009) and Neverver (Barbour 2013), as well as several more masters theses: Malua Bay (Wessells 2012), Espiegle’s Bay (2013) and V’enen Taut, also known as Big Nambas (Dodd 2014).

⁵ Leina Isno, “Ninde Language Project Report For Waikato University Linguistics Department” (unpublished manuscript, October 2015, 5-6).

the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organised a group of international linguists to create a methodology for assessing the vitality and endangerment of a given language. This group put together a concept paper with nine criteria in which to assess a language; these criteria assess the vitality, state of endangerment, attitudes and need for documentation. Tryon (2010, 74) estimates that only 30% of Mewun children speak the language. From this criterion alone, the UNESCO scale would rate Ninde as ‘definitively endangered’. More investigation into the absolute number of speakers, intergenerational transmission, and other criteria needs to be conducted.

1.2 Genetic Affiliation

All of the indigenous languages of Vanuatu belong to the Oceanic subgroup of the Austronesian language family. In terms of membership, the Austronesian language family is one of the largest in the world with approximately 1,200 member languages, 450 of which belong to the Oceanic subgroup (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002, 1).

The genetic relationship between the Proto Austronesian language family and Proto Oceanic subgroup is as follows: Proto-Austronesian/Proto-Malayo-Polynesian/Central/Eastern Malayo-Polynesian linkage/Proto-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian/Proto Oceanic (Ross, Pawley & Osmond 2011, 7).

The languages of the Oceanic subgroup can be further divided (Ross, Pawley & Osmond 2011, 8). The ni-Vanuatu languages can be found within the Southern Oceanic linkage. The Southern Oceanic linkage is then further divided into three geographical/linguistic regions of Vanuatu: North Vanuatu, Central Vanuatu and South Vanuatu. Ninde falls into the Central Vanuatu linkage (Lynch 2016).

1.3 Previous Research

Early missionary contact in Southwest Bay, as well as projects carried out by researchers including anthropologist Kirk Huffman, who spent time in Southwest Bay, as well as ethnobotany doctoral student Joe McCarter (2012) and anthropology doctoral student Mark Love (2016) mean the Southwest Bay region has experienced rather high levels of external research interest.

There have been several government-funded publications regarding ethnobotany and containing wordlists of botanical objects in indigenous languages including Ninde. The first, *Some common trees of the New Hebrides and their vernacular names*, was written by Sheila Gowers (1976) and includes a short list of 18 plant names in Mewun (Ninde). In 1992, J.I. Wheatley published *A guide to the common trees of Vanuatu: with lists of their traditional uses & ni-Vanuatu names*, which includes a partial replication of the list found in Gowers (Wheatley 1992, 260). Wheatley includes illustrations of each plant, alongside both the scientific and local names. Finally, Walter & Sam (1993) published a collection of several fruit and nut trees found across Vanuatu, in a work titled *A Variety Collection of Nut Trees and Fruit Trees in Vanuatu*. During this project, 460 varieties of ten species of trees were tagged in twenty areas. Local names were collected from these twenty areas and listed alongside detailed descriptions of the plant. The Ninde names were provided for all ten species, as well as 45 varieties of trees and variations of their parent varieties.⁶ Though these works contribute to a Ninde dictionary, they provide little linguistic content and do not aid in the description of the language.

In addition to the non-linguistic work just described, there has also been a selection of linguistic projects on Ninde. The works are listed in chronological order, with a summary of the contribution that they have made to our knowledge of the Ninde language.

⁶ The language consultant for this project is listed as Alben Ruben.

1.3.1 Ray (1926)

Sidney Ray (1926, 293-302) was the first to provide a linguistic analysis of the language in the form of a short grammar sketch of nine pages in length in his volume entitled *A comparative study of the Melanesian island languages*. This sketch was based on the written records of missionaries, and while Ray does make assertions of the phonological inventory of Ninde (which he refers to as Meaun), he also admits to having “no account of Meaun sounds” (1926, 293).⁷ His work begins with an alphabet containing five vowels, twenty-three consonants and one ‘compound consonant’ (1926, 293). Ray also provides a brief account of various parts of speech (articles, nouns, pronouns, a genitive, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, numerals) and phonological and morphological processes (vowel harmony, affixation, negation). Each section contains rules and/or forms of the given language feature with examples following. The overall sketch is brief, and although Ray provides a good mix of words, phrases and sentences in his data, the data is derived solely from religious translations.

1.3.2 Deacon (1934)

In his work entitled *Malekula: A vanishing people in the New Hebrides*, A. Bernard Deacon (1934, 730) provides a single short text regarding the creation of the Mewun people, referring to the language by the same name (Mewun). This story contains approximately 30 unique lexical items. The rest of Deacon’s work on Ninde is filled with ethnographic information with limited lexical and structural data throughout his writing. Generally, the data include local names of plants or animals, but without enough description for an outsider, and possibly not even an insider, to identify them. There is also a description of death and the soul (1934, 561-562) that contains ten words relating to the body’s intangible features (including soul, shadow, breath). A list of approximately 65 kin and address terms

⁷ 1915. *Nepepe Tiravelawo* [Four gospels and most of the rest of the New Testament]. Paisley: Alexander Gardner. By Robert Boyd. (An earlier translation of Mark appeared in 1905).

1918. *Pepe Timetaha Nene Nohiene Ti-Meaun, Malekula, New Hebrides* [Primer, catechism and Bible stories]. Melbourne: Brown, Prior and Co. (Revision of 1905 version.)

1918. *Nambi Tiravelawo, Nimbui Tirelau. Nomboi Tatloh* [Hymnal]. Melbourne: Brown, Prior and Co.

is included, along with a brief analysis of various morphemes used within the kin term system (1934, 91-96). He also proposes a list of 12 ‘months’ that roughly correspond to the yearly cycle of the yam (1934, 177-178). Of these 12 months, there is a translation for seven. Deacon died in the field before he had annotated his field data with metadata. Camilla Wedgewood undertook the very challenging task of editing Deacon’s notes into a book, but she was unable to verify any of the data in the field. As such, more investigation into Deacon’s work needs to be completed to identify whether data is, indeed, from Ninde or from neighbouring languages.

1.3.3 Tryon (1976)

Darrell Tryon (1976) compiled a comparative database of nearly 300 words in 179 different language varieties, in his volume titled *New Hebrides languages: An internal classification*. Ninde, which he refers to as Labo, is represented with data collected from both Lawa and Wintua villages. Labo is one of his more extensive data sets, including 280 entries for 292 attempted elicitations. These elicitations include basic nouns (body parts, kin terms, animals), stative words (colours and physical properties), numerals, pronouns, various verbs (sing, say, call out, walk, sit) and locatives. Like Charpentier’s later (1982) work, this volume is laid out in a comparative format, rather than a single word list. There are no examples of sentences, phrases or natural speech to give context to the words elicited.

1.3.4 Charpentier (1982)

Jean-Michel Charpentier (1982) compiled a much more extensive vocabulary of approximately 3,500 words via a linguistic survey, as well as some grammatical morphemes, published in a major work entitled *Atlas linguistique du Sud-Malakula (Vanuatu)*. Spending his time based in Namal among the Small Nambas, he collected data from several South-Malekula language varieties. His final volume contained data from nineteen total language varieties. The list contains lexemes relating to the human body, life cycles, crops, animals, cooking, sensations/emotions, numerals, various kinds of verbs (including transitive,

intransitive and auxiliary verbs), and pronouns (Charpentier 1982, 87-103). There are no examples of sentences, phrases or any other context in which the words are used, and some data are presented as affixes only, making the work of limited structural value.

1.3.5 Clark (2009)

In 2009, Ross Clark's volume *Leo Taui: A comparative lexical study of North and Central Vanuatu languages* was published. The work is historical comparative, using wordlists of Vanuatu languages. Ninde is one of the languages included and Clark presents his proposed phoneme inventory based on the data collected by Charpentier (1982), Tryon (1976), Ray (1926), Gowers (1976) Deacon (1934) and Walter and Sam (1993). Clark's proposed inventory includes a collection of 19 consonants and five vowels (2009, 39). He gives a brief description of the proposed phonology and phonological conditioning as well as changes in phonology from Proto Central Vanuatu (2009, 39-41).

1.3.6 Dimock, Greenback, Pearce (2011)

In 2011, Elizabeth Pearce (Victoria University of Wellington, NZ) taught a field methods class where Ninde was the focus. Along with linguistics students Laura Dimock and Emily Greenback, she compiled a 27 page grammar sketch of Ninde working with native speaker Leina Isno. Their proposed phoneme inventory is comprised of 18 consonants and six vowels. They also offer a brief description of pronouns, nouns and noun phrases (including articles, demonstratives, adjectives, numerals, quantifiers and possessives), verbs and verb phrases (including prepositions, negation and interrogatives) and complex sentences (including coordination, subordination, purpose and conditional). A mixture of words, phrases and both simple and complex sentences are presented in the sketch, drawn from elicitation with Isno, and an audio recording of Isno retelling a traditional narrative. The unpublished grammar sketch entitled *A Sketch Grammar of Ninde*

and audio recording is available online through the Open Language Archives Community (OLAC 2015).

1.3.7 Barbour (2012-ongoing) Exploring Mood/Malekula Languages Project

In 2012, Julie Barbour of the University of Waikato (Hamilton, NZ) began a comparative study on the grammatical mood systems of the Vanuatu languages. This project was quickly narrowed to a focus on Malekula island, and has transitioned into the long term Malekula Languages Project. Ninde became a case study language for this project in 2013 at the request of Leina Isno, who wanted to continue collaborating with linguists after her initial work with Pearce at Victoria University. My own involvement with Ninde began in 2013, when Isno visited Waikato and participated in data collection activities. In 2014, she visited with her Ninde speaking parents Peter and Ruby Isno, who were visiting New Zealand from Southwest Bay, Malekula. I used the audio data collected from Isno to conduct a preliminary phonological analysis of the language. Further data has been collected for the Malekula Languages Project, including data collected by Isno during a 2014 trip to Malekula, and translated school materials produced by two Ninde teachers during Ministry of Education literacy workshops facilitated by Dr Barbour in 2015 and 2016. There is now an extensive corpus of Ninde materials contributed by Isno and her family, and by other native speakers on Malekula itself (see §1.5.1 for the corpus list).

1.3.8 Vanuatu Languages & Lifeways Project (2014-ongoing)

In 2014, a major project on Vanuatu began at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena. In 2015 and 2016, project director Russell Gray sent a research assistant (Dr. Aviva Shimelman) to replicate Tryon's wordlist study. Shimelman recorded Ninde wordlists in the villages of Lawa, Lorlow, Windua and Opmomba, as well as multiple other wordlists from villages around the island. The wordlists were transcribed and placed online through the Austronesian Basic Vocabulary Database. She also recorded 21 stories in Ninde, although there are no transcriptions or translations of these. The recordings are

publicly available online through PARADISEC. Two additional video recordings are posted on Youtube⁸. The wordlists are of particular interest to this project, as Gray's project is the first to make audio recordings for comparative phonological study. At the time of writing, there are no plans for further work on Ninde by Dr Shimelman.

1.3.9 Crouch & Schäfer (2016-2017)

Caroline Crouch, a graduate student from the University of Santa Barbara, California, undertook fieldwork in Southwest Bay with fellow student Kevin Schäfer. Crouch's fieldwork was funded by a small grant from the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme. Crouch and Schäfer both gave oral presentations on Ninde at the 9th International Austronesian and Papuan Languages and Linguistics Conference in mid-2017. Crouch had intended to carry out a doctoral project on the language, but it is presently unclear if this project has come to fruition.

1.3.10 Summary

To date, the main focus of linguistic research has been either the phonology of Ninde, the compilation of word lists or providing a very basic overview of the grammar of the language. A detailed analysis of Ninde, based on a corpus of extended spoken and written language has not been undertaken, and this project thus aims to begin a more detailed examination of Ninde.

⁸ "Weaving Mats / wivim mat (Lawa, Malakula, Vanuatu)":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZzE1fzuNLI>
"Making Natangora / mekem natangora (Labo, Malakula, Vanuatu)":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkABEPzjZuc>

1.4 Research Aims

The aim of this thesis is to provide a synchronic typological description of the basic morphosyntactic features of the Ninde language. In order to complete this analysis, 89 text files of mixed media (translated school readers, stories, conversation/event recounting, narratives and process explanations) were used, of which 32 had corresponding audio recordings. Of particular interest to this project are the noun and noun phrase. Typological analysis was used in order to describe Ninde's noun phrase structure, verb phrase structure and basic clause structure. Some additional morphological processes are also discussed.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Data Collection

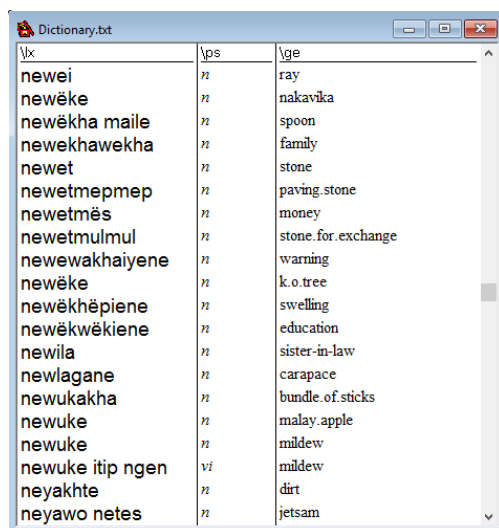
The data for this project were collected under approvals and permissions given to either Dr Julie Barbour, or myself (see Appendix A). The majority of materials were provided by Leina Isno, but there are also materials provided by her parents Peter and Ruby Isno, and two Ninde school teachers Anniely Kaitip and Jenery Kambong. The school teachers also edited some of Leina Isno's translations of children's stories. Finally, some elicited sound files from a previous project conducted under the supervision of Dr Barbour were utilised. These files contained either a single word or phrase. The lists of files used can be found in Appendix

1.5.2 Data Processing

The Ninde corpus was processed using several different pieces of software. Large audio files (.wav) were broken into sections using Audacity [www.audacityteam.org]. These audio files were then segmented using Transcriber [trans.sourceforge.net], and transcriptions and translations were added. Transcriber files (.trs) and audio files (.wav) were imported into the Linguistics Toolbox [software.sil.org/toolbox]. Lexical items were entered into the Toolbox dictionary file as exemplified by Figures 1.4 and 1.5. For each lexical

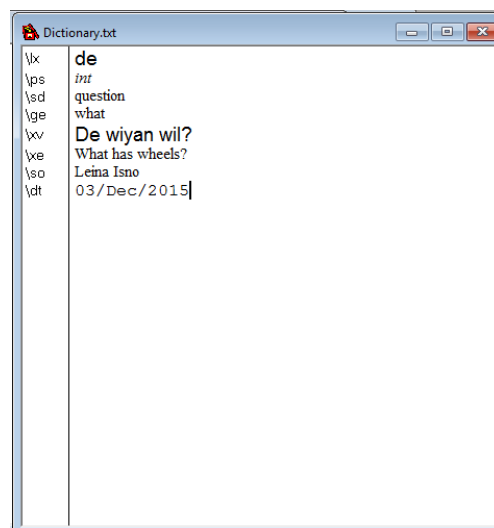
entry, I assigned a part of speech and a gloss in English, as well as grammatical notes and other information where relevant. The dictionary currently has just over 2,000 entries.

Figure 1.2 Ninde Toolbox Dictionary



\lx	\ps	\ge
newei	71	ray
newëke	71	nakavika
newëkha maile	71	spoon
newekhawekha	71	family
newet	71	stone
newetmepmep	71	paving stone
newetmës	71	money
newetmulmul	71	stone for exchange
newewakhaiyene	71	warning
newëke	71	k.o. tree
newëkhëpiene	71	swelling
newëkwëkiene	71	education
newila	71	sister-in-law
newilagane	71	carapace
newukakha	71	bundle of sticks
newuke	71	malay apple
newuke	71	mildew
newuke itip ngen	71	mildew
neyakhte	71	dirt
neyawo netes	71	jetsam

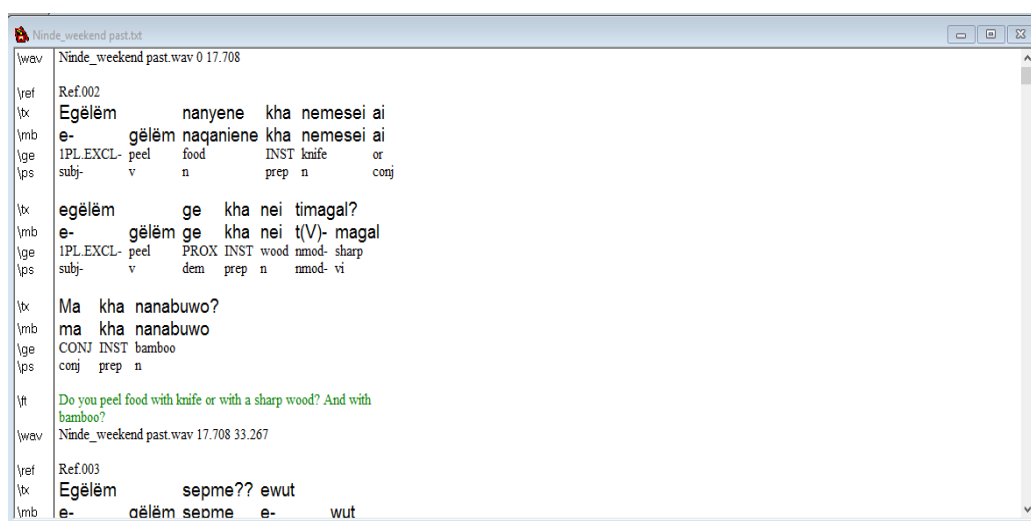
Figure 1.3 Ninde Toolbox Dictionary Entry



\lx	\ps	\sd	\ge	\wv	\xe	\so	\dt
de	int	question	what				
				De wiyan wil?			
				What has wheels?			
				Leina Isno			
				03/Dec/2015			

With data in the Toolbox dictionary, I was able to parse texts using the interlinear function. This allowed me to produce texts with morpheme-by-morpheme glosses, part of speech information, a free translation, and a time stamp for the related audio file. Where texts were written rather than spoken, I simply created text files in Toolbox and interlinearised them.

Figure 1.4 Ninde Toolbox Data File



\wv	Ninde_weekend past.wav 0 17.708
\ref	Ref.002
\lx	Egëlëm nanyene kha nemesei ai
\mb	e- gëlëm naqaniene kha nemesei ai
\ge	1PL.EXCL- peel food INST knife or
\ps	subj- v n prep n conj
\lx	egëlëm ge kha nei timagal?
\mb	e- gëlëm ge kha nei t(V)- magal
\ge	1PL.EXCL- peel PROX INST wood nmod- sharp
\ps	subj- v dem prep n nmod- vi
\lx	Ma kha nanabuwo?
\mb	ma kha nanabuwo
\ge	CONJ INST bamboo
\ps	conj prep n
\ft	Do you peel food with knife or with a sharp wood? And with bamboo?
\wv	Ninde_weekend past.wav 17.708 33.267
\ref	Ref.003
\lx	Egëlëm sepme?? ewut
\mb	e- aëlëm seome e- wut

Phrase and clause data presented in this thesis end with the Toolbox identifier and reference number. The Toolbox reference number is included after each example

to signal the source of each phrasal or clausal data point. The entry shown in Figure 1.7 is used to display clause level coordination. The Toolbox reference found at the end matches that in Figure 1.6. Lexical items are derived from the Ninde dictionary.

Figure 1.5 Example Data Entry & Reference

[E-gëlēm	naqanyene	kha	nemesei]		
1PL.EXCL-peel	food	INST	knife		
[ai	e-gëlēm	nge	kha	nei	ti-Ø-magal?]
or	1PL.EXCL-peel	3SG.O.INAN	INST	wood	REL-3SG-be.sharp
‘Do we peel food with a knife or do we peel it with wood that is sharp?’					
[Ninde_weekend past.wav 17.708 33.267]					

1.5.3 Data Analysis

In order to analyse the Ninde data, I had to first familiarise myself with common features of Malekula languages (those that have been described), as well as the common features of the Oceanic language family as a whole. Key reference works for Malekula languages included the grammars of Neverver (Barbour 2012), Neve’ei (Musgrave 2007), Nahavaq (Dimock 2009), as well as previous masters theses providing grammar sketches of V’ënen Taut/Big Nambas (Dodd 2014), Espiegle’s Bay (Holmes 2014) and Malua Bay (Wessels 2013). Overviews of the Oceanic languages included Lynch (1994), Lynch & Crowley (2001), Lynch, Ross & Crowley (2002), Crowley (1985) and Ross (2004).

In addition to looking at publications for Malekula languages and the Oceanic language family, I also made use of typological understandings to conduct my analysis of Ninde. Linguistic typology is the practice of classifying languages, or elements of languages, based on shared formal characteristics (Whaley 1997, 7). Typologies of person (Siewierska 2004), phonology (Moravcsik 2013), reduplication (Moravcsik 1978) and relative clauses (Andrews 2007) informed my analysis of Ninde, providing terminology and generalisations which I could use to better understand the Ninde data.

Throughout the analytical process, hypotheses were produced and tested through application across the Ninde corpus. Several hypotheses have been abandoned in the process; however, hypotheses that remained unproblematic and without contradiction were entered into the final thesis. For a project of this scale, the goal was a description that was consistent with the corpus; however, in no way is this intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the language.

1.6 Phonology

Previous research has suggested a consonant inventory of anywhere from 18-24 consonants and a vowel inventory of 5-6 vowels. My initial investigation of Ninde phonology suggested 16 consonants and six vowels (Murray 2016). The current orthography contains the same vowel inventory and the same total number of consonants as my initial analysis, but with two significant changes. The first change is the inclusion of the glottal stop as a segment and the elimination of the dental fricative. I initially analysed the glottal stop as an allophone of /k/ which was found in word-final and intervocalic positions. New data suggests it is contrastive, and speakers seem to prefer to write the segment, as it is highly salient to them. The next change is the elimination of the dental fricative [ð], which was initially analysed as an independent phoneme that also shared an allophonic relationship with the alveolar lateral /l/. Further investigation suggests that [ð] is an allophone of the /l/. While the distribution pattern is currently unclear, it appears to be in free variation - though the dental fricative cannot appear in the word-final position.

1.6.1 The Consonant Inventory

Table 1.3 shows the consonant phoneme inventory, where the first row names the place of articulation, and the first column indicates manner of articulation.

	Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labio-Velar	Glottal
Plain Plosives	p		t		k		ʔ
Prenasalised Plosives	b		d		g		
Fricatives			s		x		
Nasals	m		n		ŋ		
Trills			r				
Laterals			l				
Glides	w			j			

Table 1.1 Ninde Consonant Inventory

Each of the following tables below illustrates the phonemic, phonetic and orthographic forms of the given phonemes, along with some example lexical items.

Table 1.4 shows the four plain plosives that are attested in Ninde: /p/, /t/, /k/ and /ʔ/. The first three of these plosives are occasionally lightly aspirated. They differ from the plosives in Table 1.5 in that they are not prenasalised. The plain plosives contrast in word-initial, medial and final positions with the exception of the glottal stop, which only appears word-finally and intervocalically. Minimal pairs are established with /p/, /t/ and /k/, while /ʔ/ can form a subminimal pair with each of these.

Contrasting Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/p/ [p]	<i>p</i>	[pox]	<i>pokh</i>	‘scratch’
/t/ [t]	<i>t</i>	[tox]	<i>tokh</i>	‘live’
/k/ [k]	<i>k</i>	[kox]	<i>kokh</i>	‘stay’
/ʔ/ [ʔ]	<i>q</i>	[soʔon]	<i>soqon</i>	‘fill’
/p/ [p]	<i>p</i>	[nanpopou]	<i>nanpopou</i>	‘caterpillar’
/t/ [t]	<i>t</i>	[^m botolo]	<i>bototho</i>	‘be.hungry’
/k/ [k]	<i>k</i>	[mokou]	<i>mokou</i>	‘cousin’

Table 1.2 Ninde Plain Plosives

Three voiced plosives are attested in Ninde, which are all prenasalised. They contrast in word-initial and medial position. Both /d/ and /g/ are unattested in word-final position. The phonemes /b/, /d/ and /g/ are realised as [^mb], [ⁿd] and [^ŋg]. Table 1.5 shows a contrastive set of the prenasalised plosives.

Contrasting Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/b/ [^m b]	<i>b</i>	[^m bu ^m bum]	<i>bubum</i>	‘grandfather’
/d/ [ⁿ d]	<i>d</i>	[ⁿ dum ⁿ dum]	<i>dumdum</i>	‘resound’
/g/ [^ŋ g]	<i>g</i>	[^ŋ gum ^ŋ gum]	<i>gumgum</i>	‘rinse one’s mouth’

Table 1.3 Ninde Prenasalised Plosives

Table 1.6 shows contrastive sets of the prenasalised plosives with their plain counterparts. The first two sets show word-initial contrast, while the final set shows medial contrast.

Contrasting Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/b/ [ᵐb]	<i>b</i>	[ᵐboxoi]	<i>bokhoi</i>	‘be deaf’
/p/ [p]	<i>p</i>	[pox]	<i>pokh</i>	‘scratch’
/d/ [ᵐd]	<i>d</i>	[ᵐdam]	<i>dam</i>	‘yam’
/t/ [t]	<i>t</i>	[taᵐḡ] ⁹	<i>tab</i>	‘fat’
/g/ [ᵐg]	<i>g</i>	[soᵐgoxo]	<i>sogokho</i>	‘play’
/k/ [k]	<i>k</i>	[mokou]	<i>mokou</i>	‘cousin’
/ʔ/ [ʔ]	<i>q</i>	[soʔon]	<i>soqon</i>	‘fill’

Table 1.4 Ninde Prenasalised & Plain Plosives

There are two fricatives attested in the Ninde corpus: /s/ and /x/. Ninde fricatives contrast in word-initial, medial and final positions. Table 1.7 shows a minimal pair between /x/ and /s/.

Contrasting Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/x/ [x]	<i>kh</i>	[xaxa]	<i>khakha</i>	‘be painful’
/s/ [s]	<i>s</i>	[saxa]	<i>sakha</i>	‘still’

Table 1.5 Ninde Fricatives

Three nasals are attested in Ninde: /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/. The three nasals contrast in word-initial position. Table 1.8 shows minimal pairs of the Ninde nasals.

⁹ The bilabial trill [ᵐḡ] is an allophone of the phoneme /b/. It is found only in word-final position.

Contrasting Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/m/ [m]	<i>m</i>	[mox]	<i>mokh</i>	‘have life’
/ŋ/ [ŋ]	<i>ng</i>	[ŋox]	<i>ngokh</i>	‘growl’
/m/ [m]	<i>m</i>	[mene]	<i>mene</i>	‘where’
/n/ [n]	<i>n</i>	[nene]	<i>nene</i>	‘NHUM.GEN’
/n/ [n]	<i>n</i>	[naxa]	<i>nakha</i>	‘3PL’
/ŋ/ [ŋ]	<i>ng</i>	[ŋaxa]	<i>ngakha</i>	‘breathe’

Table 1.6 Ninde Nasals

Two liquids, /r/ and /l/ are attested in Ninde. Ninde liquids contrast in word-initial and medial positions. Table 1.9 shows contrast between /r/ and /l/ with two subminimal pairs.

Contrasting Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/r/ [r]	<i>r</i>	[roro]	<i>roro</i>	‘bend’
/l/ [l]	<i>l</i>	[loulou]	<i>lolo</i>	‘be small’
/r/ [r]	<i>r</i>	[ras]	<i>ras</i>	‘EMPH’
/l/ [l]	<i>l</i>	[laŋlaŋ]	<i>langlang</i>	‘lie (v)’

Table 1.7 Ninde Liquids

The allophones [ð] and [l] have an allophonic relationship. While [ð] cannot be found in the word-final position, the two phones are used interchangeably in word-initial and medial positions.

Allophonic Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/ð/ [ð]	<i>th</i>	[ðo]	<i>tho</i>	‘go’
/l/ [l]	<i>l</i>	[lo]	<i>lo</i>	‘go’
/ð/ [ð]	<i>th</i>	[ðo ^m buge]	<i>thobuge</i>	‘yesterday’
/l/ [l]	<i>l</i>	[lo ^m buge]	<i>lobuge</i>	‘yesterday’
/ð/ [ð]	<i>th</i>	[ðatane]	<i>thatane</i>	‘downward’
/l/ [l]	<i>l</i>	[latane]	<i>latane</i>	‘downward’
/ð/ [ð]	<i>th</i>	[ðami]	<i>thami</i>	‘inside’
/l/ [l]	<i>l</i>	[lami]	<i>lami</i>	‘inside’
/ð/ [ð]	<i>th</i>	[goðo]	<i>gotho</i>	‘look’
/l/ [l]	<i>l</i>	[golo]	<i>golo</i>	‘look’

Table 1.8 Allophones [ð] and [l]

Some distribution medially appears to be consistent (i.e. *pelawas* ‘be bad’ is never attested in the corpus as *pethawas**), while some allophony is attested medially (i.e. *yatheyathe* ‘singing’ and *yaleyale* ‘singing’). Further investigation is needed to establish a hypothesis regarding the distribution patterns of these allophones.¹⁰

Two non-lateral approximates are attested within the Ninde corpus: /w/ and /j/. The approximates contrast in word-initial position. The minimal pair shown in Table 1.11 establishes contrast between /w/ and /j/.

¹⁰ Some distribution patterns are already apparent. For example, there appears to be free variation before /a/ and /o/, but the dental fricative is never attested before /i/.

Contrasting Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/w/ [w]	w	[wox]	wokh	‘DIR’
/j/ [j]	y	[jox]	yokh	‘do, make’

Table 1.9 Ninde Approximates

1.6.2 The Vowel Inventory

The vowels of Ninde include /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/, the most common cross-linguistically (Moravcsik 2013), as well as /ə/.¹¹ Table 1.12 shows the Ninde Vowel inventory.

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Close-mid	e		o
Open-mid		ə	
Open	a		

Table 1.10 Ninde Vowel Inventory

Table 1.13 shows the phonemic, phonetic and orthographic representation of each vowel alongside a series of minimal or subminimal pairs, showing contrast between the vowel phonemes.

¹¹ Initial analysis showed very little use of the /i/ phoneme. However, after the addition of data from multiple language consultants, it appears that language consultant, Leina Isno, often realised her /i/ phoneme as /ə/. This is thought to be due to her extended exposure to New Zealand English where /ə/ is common (Crystal 2003, 354; Bauer & Warren 2004, 587).

Contrasting Segments	Orthographic Representation	Phonetic Word Form	Orthographic Word Form	Gloss
/a/ [a]	<i>a</i>	[yaxa]	<i>yakha</i>	‘all’
/e/ [e]	<i>e</i>	[yex]	<i>yekh</i>	‘do, make’
/a/ [a]	<i>a</i>	[na ^m bi]	<i>nabi</i>	‘song’
/ə/ [ə]	<i>ě</i>	[nə ^m ḅ]	<i>něb</i>	‘firewood’
/a/ [a]	<i>a</i>	[ta ^m ḅ]	<i>tab</i>	‘fat’
/i/ [i]	<i>i</i>	[ti ^m ḅ]	<i>tib</i>	‘swell’
/a/ [a]	<i>a</i>	[nawa]	<i>nawa</i>	‘heart/breath/soul’
/o/ [o]	<i>o</i>	[nawo]	<i>nawo</i>	‘paddle’
/a/ [a]	<i>a</i>	[ⁿ dam]	<i>dam</i>	‘yam’
/u/ [u]	<i>u</i>	[ⁿ dum ⁿ dum]	<i>dumdum</i>	‘resound’
/e/ [e]	<i>e</i>	[mene]	<i>mene</i>	‘where’
/ə/ [ə]	<i>ě</i>	[mən]	<i>měn</i>	‘drink’
/e/ [e]	<i>e</i>	[ne ⁿ de]	<i>nede</i>	‘basket’
/i/ [e]	<i>i</i>	[ni ⁿ de]	<i>nide</i>	‘what’
/e/ [e]	<i>e</i>	[mem]	<i>mem</i>	‘ripe, ready’
/o/ [o]	<i>o</i>	[mom]	<i>mom</i>	‘old, rotting’
/e/ [e]	<i>e</i>	[nele]	<i>nele</i>	‘feather’
/u/ [u]	<i>u</i>	[nule]	<i>nule</i>	‘lightning’

/ə/ [ə]	ě	[səŋ]	<i>sěng</i>	‘tear (v)’
/i/ [i]	<i>i</i>	[siŋ]	<i>sing</i>	‘peel’
/ə/ [ə]	ě	[kəne]	<i>kěne</i>	‘1SG’
/o/ [o]	<i>o</i>	[nokone]	<i>nokone</i>	‘corn’
/ə/ [ə]	ě	[səm]	<i>sěm</i>	‘cut (w. axe, knife)’
/u/ [u]	<i>u</i>	[sum]	<i>sum</i>	‘fall down’
/i/ [i]	<i>i</i>	[li]	<i>li</i>	‘see’
/o/ [o]	<i>o</i>	[lo]	<i>lo</i>	‘go’
/i/ [i]	<i>i</i>	[ami]	<i>ami</i>	‘village’
/u/ [u]	<i>u</i>	[kamu]	<i>kamu</i>	‘2PL’
/o/ [o]	<i>o</i>	[mom]	<i>mom</i>	‘old, rotting’
/u/ [u]	<i>u</i>	[mamum]	<i>mamum</i>	‘mum’

Table 1.11 Ninde Vowels

1.6.3 Phonotactic Constraints

The World Atlas of Language Structure (WALS) notes that while some languages allow for segments to combine freely, other languages are much more heavily restricted (Maddieson n.d.). The combination of segments and what is allowed is generally expressed by the number of consonants that are able to occur before or after a vowel within a given syllable (2013). The most basic syllable structure attested is CV. Complex nuclei (VV) are also attested. Segments in Ninde are associated with C slots and V slots in a one-to-one relationship as shown below with both simple and complex nuclei:

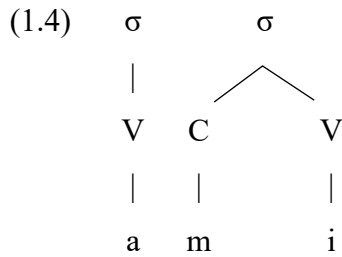
(1.1)	‘PART’	[i]	<i>i</i>	V
	‘go’	[ðo]	<i>lo</i>	CV
	‘or’	[ai]	<i>ai</i>	VV
	‘one’	[sei]	<i>sei</i>	CVV

There are several polysyllabic lexemes attested with complex nuclei, giving evidence that complex nuclei are permitted.

(1.2)	‘knife’	[ne.me.sei]	<i>nemesei</i>	CV.CV.CVV
	‘island cabbage’	[no.moi]	<i>nomoi</i>	CV.CVV
	‘be white’	[mai.le]	<i>maile</i>	CVV.CV

The particle *i* and conjunction *ai* in example (1.1) above also give evidence that an onset is not obligatory in Ninde. The following show the syllable trees for the *ai* ‘or’ and *ami* ‘village’.

(1.3)	σ	σ
	V	V
	a	i



Where a segmental structure like VCV is attested, the Onset-first Principle applies. This principle states: “(a) syllable initial consonants are maximised to the extent consistent with the syllable structure conditions of the language and (b) syllable-final consonants are maximised to the extent consistent with the syllable structure conditions of the language. Principle (a) applies before principle (b) in any derivation” (Katamba 1989, 161). This means VCV words will have the syllable structure V.CV rather than VC.V:

(1.5) ‘village’ [a.mi] *ami* V.CV

This also applies to more complex words with structures such as CVCVC. With the principle applied, the syllable makeup would consist of CV.CVC rather than CVC.VC:

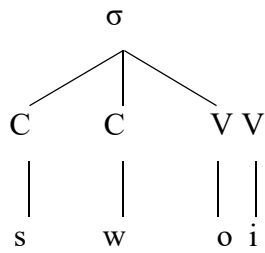
(1.6) ‘feed’	[wa.ŋuŋ]	<i>waŋuŋ</i>	CV.CVC
‘(my) grandmother	[ne.suŋ]	<i>nesuŋ</i>	CV.CVC

The alveolar fricative /s/ is attested as the initial consonant in a number of clusters.

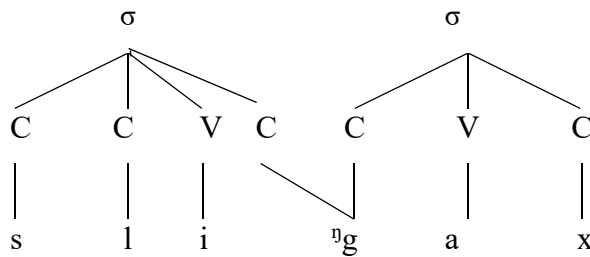
(1.7) ‘fish with bow and arrow’	[sli. ^h gax]	<i>sligax</i>	CCV.CVC
‘sit’	[spo]	<i>spo</i>	CCV
‘splash one’s face/head’	[swoi]	<i>swoi</i>	CCV
‘NEG.EXIST’	[skeske]	<i>skeske</i>	CCV.CCV

The following show syllable trees for words containing complex onsets.

(1.8) [swoi]

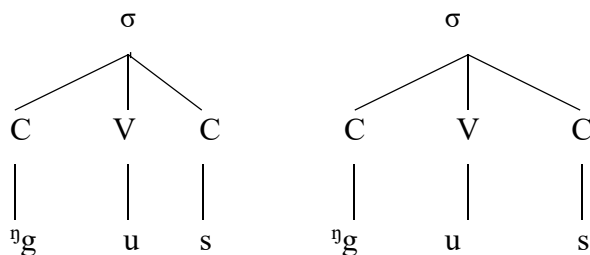


(1.9) [sli^ŋgax]



As shown in the syllable diagram of [sli^ŋgax], prenasalised plosives occupy one segment on the segmental tier. Prenasalisation can be assigned to a preceding coda when there is no coda consonant (see 1.9). The reduplicated verb [^ŋgus^ŋgus] in (1.10) shows that prenasalisation is articulated with the plosive when there is no preceding C slot available.

(1.10) [^ŋgus^ŋgus]



Closed syllables are permitted in Ninde. There are a handful of examples with simple CVC structures. Following are examples of closed syllables in monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic words:

(1.11)	‘drink’	[mən]	<i>mĕn</i>	CVC
	‘have life’	[mox]	<i>mox</i>	CVC
	‘be yellow’	[lət]	<i>lĕt</i>	CVC
	‘feed’	[wa.ŋan]	<i>wangan</i>	CV.CVC
	‘crab’	[nox.kum]	<i>nokhkum</i>	CVC.CVC
	‘1DU.EXCL’	[ka.max]	<i>kamakh</i>	CV.CVC
	‘first’	[me.tax.ke]	<i>metakhke</i>	CV.CVC.CV
	‘3SG.child’	[net.no.wox]	<i>netnowokh</i>	CVC.CV.CVC
	‘dolphin’	[na.xan.wa.ge]	<i>nakhanwage</i>	CV.CVC.CV.CV

While all consonants are attested in the onset of Ninde syllables, they are much more restricted in the coda. This is common cross-linguistically (Katamba 1989, 165). Non-lateral approximants (/w/ and /j/) and the prenasalised alveolar plosive /d/ and dental fricative [ð] are unattested in the coda. There is also no evidence of consonant clusters in coda position.

1.6.4 Orthography

Table 1.14 shows the working orthography for Ninde, including the glottal stop. The orthography was made with consideration to conventions already in use on Malekula Island, and also with reference to Bislama and English, which are the languages in which speakers currently develop literacy.

Consonants		Vowels	
/p/	p	/a/	a
/t/	t	/e/	e
/k/	k	/i/	i
/ʔ/	q	/o/	o
/b/	b	/u/	u
/d/	d	/ə/	ë
/g/	g		
/s/	s		
[ð]	th ¹²		
/x/	kh		
/m/	m		
/n/	n		
/ŋ/	ng		
/r/	r		
/l/	l		
/w/	w		
/j/	y		

Table 1.12 Ninde Orthography

¹² Because [ð] is presently thought to be an allophone of /l/, it is not found in the phoneme inventory. It is, however, included in the orthography and left in the data. It was left in to not only show the variation in pronunciation the data, but also because it's status as an allophone rather than a separate phoneme is not certain.

1.7 The Content of the Thesis

The current work is presented in three parts. Part I is an introduction to and background information about the language. Part II is a small-scale grammar sketch of the Ninde language, while Part III is a more in-depth description of Ninde nouns and the noun phrase. This description was completed through the analysis of 89 text files, of which 32 had corresponding audio files. The data was collected between December 2013 and November 2016. The language description in this thesis is not exhaustive and is limited by the relatively small corpus. There are many grammatical topics that have yet to be described.

In Part I Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the Ninde language as well as this thesis project. Ninde background and genetic affiliation are discussed, as well as the research aims and methodology of the current project. An overview of the phonological system and a working orthography used to represent the data in this thesis are presented, and will continue with suggestions for future research. Part II is comprised of four chapters, which make up a brief grammar sketch. Chapter 2 begins the grammar sketch, where a brief account of Ninde pronouns, nouns and the noun phrase is given. Chapter 3 describes the language's verbs and the verb complex. This includes the verbs' syntactic classes, verb phrase structure, aspectual markers and adverbs. Morphological processes such as reduplication and negation are also briefly discussed. Chapter 4 surveys the clause structure of Ninde, including basic word order, verbal and nonverbal clauses, non-core arguments, clausal markers, interrogatives, imperatives and prohibitives. Chapter 5 gives an account of complex clause structure, including a description of Ninde coordination and subordination. This chapter and the wider grammar sketch concludes with the suggestion of topics for further research. Part III provides a more in-depth analysis of the noun phrase. Chapter 6 gives a fuller analysis of the Ninde pronominal system, including independent personal pronouns, indefinite pronouns, inclusory pronouns and an anaphoric pronoun. Demonstrative pronouns are also introduced, though described later in section 7.3. Chapters 7 and 8 provide an in-depth discussion of Ninde nouns and the noun phrase. Like many

other Malekula languages¹³, Ninde nouns can be categorised into three subclasses: common, personal and local. These subclasses along with noun modification, such as relative clauses, number marking and possession, are described. Chapter 7 focuses on the description of common nouns, their modifiers and morphological processes (nominalisation and compounding), while chapter 8 describes personal and local nouns. Part III ends with a suggestion of topics for further research. A copy of the ethical approval I was granted by the University of Waikato is presented in Appendix A. Finally, the thesis concludes with an appendix of four excerpts from data files that were analysed for the purposes of this description. These files include excerpts from a school reader, a conversation about the activities about a past weekend, a process description for making laplap¹⁴ and a traditional story.

1.8 Scope for future investigation

A comprehensive survey of the status of the Ninde language has yet to be completed. Ninde is spoken in a variety of villages, and the actual status of the language is not presently known in the linguistic community. An investigation using the criteria set out by UNESCO to assess language vitality would be useful. These criteria include: speaker population, proportion of speakers within the total population, domains and functions, new domains and media accepted by the language and availability of written texts (UNESCO 2003, 7-15). UNESCO also provides a scale upon which to rate the quality of documentation. Ninde's documentation would seem to be 'fair' at best. A comprehensive assessment of all villages using the language will provide a better understanding of the vitality of the language today.

In addition to a speaker survey, audio recordings from a range of speakers would greatly contribute to what is known about the language. Presently, the corpus of audio files consists of recordings of only two speakers from the same village. A

¹³ Neverver (Barbour 2013), Espiegle's Bay (Holmes 2014), V'ënen Taut (Dodd 2014), Malua Bay (Wessels 2013).

¹⁴ Laplap is the national dish of Vanuatu. It is made from breadfruit, taro or yam roots and cooked on an open fire.

range of speakers from the various villages would help highlight any variation – especially in the phonological system. The current data is also limited in its form. While there are recordings of natural speech, a large amount of the corpus consists of translated school readers and other stories. Recordings of a wider range of speaking genre (process explanation, traditional stories, conversation) would provide a more robust corpus from which linguists can extract data.

Part Two

A Grammar Sketch

2 Nouns and Pronouns

This section gives an overview of the Ninde noun phrase, discussed in more detail in Chapters 7 and 8. Nouns and pronouns can both act as the head of a noun phrase. Ninde nouns can be divided into three classes: common (§7.1), personal (§8.1) and local (§8.2), based upon their usage and the modifiers they can take.

2.1 Pronouns

	Singular		Dual	Plural
First Person	<i>kēne</i>	Inclusive	<i>kitakh</i>	<i>kite</i>
		Exclusive	<i>kamakh</i>	<i>kamem</i>
Second Person	<i>nug</i>		<i>kamokh</i>	<i>kamu</i>
Third Person	<i>n(iy)e, nge</i>		<i>rakh</i>	<i>nakha</i>
Indefinite	<i>tuwa</i>		<i>(tuwa rakh)</i>	<i>(tuwa kho)</i>

Table 2.1 Ninde Independent Pronoun Paradigm

Ninde has free form independent pronouns, which display a three-way number distinction (§6.1). An indefinite pronoun *tuwa* is also attested and is made plural by the plural morpheme *kho*. Pronouns are discussed fully in Chapter 6.

Independent pronouns are able to fill the S-function of an intransitive construction as well as the A and/or O-functions of a transitive construction. Independent pronouns are also able to fill the prepositional object or genitive object positions. The same form of each independent pronoun is used in each of these positions with one exception: third person singular. *Niye* is found in a variety of positions, but is always the form used to encode S- or A-function. A shortened form, *ne*, is also attested, especially when acting as the genitive object or prepositional object. The final form, *nge*, is only found in O-function and gives anaphoric reference to an entity that has already been referenced or named.

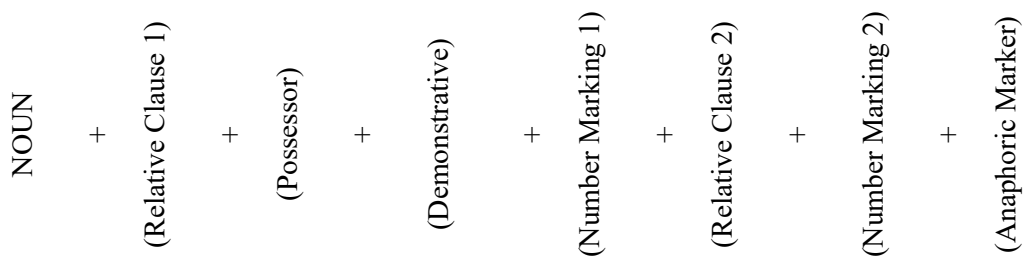
In addition to independent pronouns, there is also a set of possessive pronominal suffixes, although these appear to be falling out of usage with modern speakers. These suffixes are listed and described in §7.4.1.

A pair of demonstrative pronouns is also attested and described in §7.3.1.

2.2 Nouns

As previously stated, Ninde nouns can be classified into three categories: common nouns (§7.1), personal nouns (§8.1), and local nouns (§8.2). Personal nouns include kin terms, proper names and anthropomorphised animals or objects. They are encoded as the possessors in possessive relationships, and follow either *a*, *ya*, or *nga* in possessive constructions. Local nouns include nouns that encode spatial meaning, as well as geographic features. Local nouns can fill the O-function of a transitive construction. They encode locational meaning (i.e. *ami* ‘in the village’) without requiring a preposition. Common nouns include everything else and are distinguished by the series of modifiers they are able to take. Further, many, though not all, common nouns are marked by the initial sequence *nV-*.

As a head-initial language, Ninde head nouns are the primary element of the noun phrase with any modification found postnominally. The following shows the basic structure of the noun phrase.



While the possessor is found after the relative clause, this is only true for human possession. Possessive association (marked by the nonhuman genitive *nene*) is found directly after the head noun. Possessive association (§7.4.4) is not noted in

the noun phrase structure, as the nonhuman possessive phrase forms a complex unit with the head noun rather than acting as a modifier.

There are two positions available in the noun phrase for relative clauses. The first position is occupied by relative clauses containing a stative verb (§7.2), while the second is occupied by those containing a local noun (§7.2.2).

Number marking is also given two positions in the noun phrase. The latter of the two is occupied by the general plural marker (§7.5.1), while any other number marker can occupy the first number marker position.

Example (2.1) shows the head noun *nukhoi* modified by a possessor, indefinite (number 1) marker, relative clause and plural (number 2) marker.

	NOUN	POSSESSOR	NUM 1	REL CL	NUM 2
(2.1)	[<i>nukhoi</i>	[<i>a</i> <i>nug</i>]	<i>tuwa</i>	[<i>t-thatane</i>]	<i>kho</i>]
	leaf	H.GEN 2SG	INDF	REL-downward	PL
‘some leaves of yours underneath’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 322.181 329.471]					

Example (2.1a) shows an example with a relative clause and possessor in their post-nominal positions. Example (2.1b) shows only the possessive construction and indefinite marker. Example (2.1c) shows a relative clause, demonstrative and anaphoric marker all modifying the head noun.

(2.1a)	<i>nabaq</i>	<i>t- Ø-loulou</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>këne</i>
	turtle	REL-3SG-be.small	H.GEN	1SG
‘my small turtle’ [Year1Readers7.Ref008]				

(2.1b)	<i>nimiyathe</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>këne</i>	<i>tuwa</i>
	fish	H.GEN	1SG	INDF
‘a fish of mine’ [Year3Readers1.Ref017]				

(2.1c)	<i>numgut nene nete</i>	<i>t-Ø-miathe</i>	<i>ge</i>	<i>ka</i>
	rooster	REL-3SG-red	PROX	ANA
	‘this red rooster’ [Year2Readers.Ref004]			

2.2.1 Relative Clauses

Relative Clauses (§7.2, 5.2.1) provide further information about the head noun. They can be marked or unmarked and contain either stative verb or local noun. When marked, the stative verb is affixed by the relativiser *t(V)-*.

2.2.2 Demonstratives

There are two demonstrative pronouns attested in Ninde: the proximate demonstrative marker *ge* and the distal demonstrative marker *nge*. In order to make a dual or plural form, the dual *rakh* or plural *kho* morphemes are added after the initial demonstrative form.

(2.2)	Gloss	Singular	Dual	Plural
	‘PROX’	<i>ge</i>	<i>gerakh</i>	<i>gekho</i>
	‘DIST’	<i>nge</i>	<i>ngerakh</i>	<i>ngekho</i>

2.2.3 Possession

Direct possession (§7.4.1) in Ninde can be expressed through two different strategies: possessive affixation or the sequence of possessum followed directly by possessor. The first of these strategies appears to be falling out of usage with modern speakers. The direct suffixes have a three-way person distinction, but are only found with singular nouns.

(2.3)	Suffix	Gloss
	<i>-ng</i>	1POSS
	<i>-m</i>	2POSS
	<i>-ne</i>	3POSS

Part-whole relationships (§7.4.2) are similar to direct (alienable) possession in that they follow the structure possessum + possessor. This structure is used for relationships where the ‘part’ cannot be conceptually separated from the ‘whole’. For example, a leaf may be physically separated from a tree, but it will always be a leaf of that tree.

Indirect possession (§7.4.3) is signalled by a possessive marker *a*, (with variants *ya* or *nga*). In these relationships, the possessor is always a personal noun, following the pattern possessum + *a* + possessor_(human)

Possessive association (§7.4.4) is marked by the genitive *nene*, with the possession appearing before and the possessor appearing after the genitive. Both possession and possessor are common nouns: possessum + *nene* + possessor.

2.2.4 Number Marking

Nouns can be marked for number by a variety of modifiers: the plural marker *kho* (§7.5.1), a numeral (§7.5.2) or a quantifier (§7.5.3).

2.2.5 Anaphoric *ka*

When present, the anaphoric marker *ka* is the final element of the noun phrase. It gives reference to an entity introduced previously (see §7.6).

3 Verbs

This section will focus on the Ninde verb complex. Ninde verbs can be divided into two classes: transitive (§3.3.3) and intransitive (§3.3.1), based upon the number of core arguments the verb has. Intransitive verbs also have a subcategory of stative verbs (§3.3.2). Thus far, ditransitive verbs are not attested. Verbs take obligatory morphology in the form of a subject index (§3.1), which agrees with the subject of the construction in both person and number, as well as a morpheme that marks the tense of the verb, whether future or nonfuture (§3.2).

Ninde is a head-initial language; the verb is found as the first element of the verb complex. Therefore, any verbal morphology found before the root verb involves bound morphemes that act as prefixes. The following table shows the basic structure of the verb complex.

Subject index	+	(Tense Marking)	+	(Negative 1)	+	VERB	+	(Modifier 1)	+	(Modifier 2)	+	(Negative 2)
---------------	---	-----------------	---	--------------	---	------	---	--------------	---	--------------	---	--------------

Table 3.1 Ninde Verb Complex

At its most extended, the Ninde verb complex consists of a negated head verb, marked with a subject index, future tense, two modifiers and a final negative particle. In negative constructions, no elements of the verb complex can be found after the final negative marker. In positive constructions, the maximal verbal complex ends with the second modifier. In its simplest form, the verbal complex consists of the head verb marked for person/number.

Example (3.1) shows the minimal Ninde verb complex. Here, the head verb *yen* ‘eat, consume’ is marked with the first person singular subject index *na-*.

(3.1) *Këne na-yen nokhkum.*

1SG 1SG-eat crab

‘I eat crab.’ [Story2Ref17]

Example (3.2) shows an imperative verb complex modified by a postverbal modifier, the adverb *lagu* ‘fast’.

(3.3) *Nug=wul lagu.*

2SG=come fast

‘Come quickly.’ [Year3Readers8.Ref006]

Example (3.3) shows a positive verb complex with two modifiers: an adverb and aspectual marker.

(3.3) *Na-gom lagu saq.*

1SG-wake.up fast PFV

‘I got up quickly.’ [Year3Readers7.Ref027]

Example (3.4) shows an example of a negative construction. Within the verb complex, the head verb *tokh* ‘stay’ takes the first person singular subject index *na-* and the double negative *s-*prefix. The postverbal double negation particle *wei* marks the end of the verb complex.

(3.4) *...tkhait na-s-tokh wei,*

when 1SG-NEG1-stay NEG2

‘...when I am not here.’ [Year3Readers5.Ref006]

The maximal negative verb complex attested in the current data set is shown in example (3.5). The head verb *da* ‘good’ is marked by the third person singular subject index \emptyset -. The intensifier *ras* fills the modifier position after the head verb.

The first element of the double negative, *s-*, is affixed to the beginning of the head noun and the second element, *wei*, is the final element of the verb complex, following two postverbal modifiers.

- (2.5) *Nanikot* *Ø-s-yen* *yakha* *maqas* *wei* *nge*.
 goat 3SG-NEG1-eat all well NEG2 3SG.O.INAN
 ‘The goat didn’t eat all of it.’ [vnm10-ninde.wav 52.099 67.416]

3.1 Subject Indexes

Ninde verbs are distinguished from other grammatical categories by the variety of affixes they can carry, including most importantly an obligatory subject index. These indexes, typical of Oceanic languages generally (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 45; Ross 2004, 499), and of many Malekula languages, are portmanteau morphemes which mark the person and number of the subject. Siewierska (2004, 3) notes that it is rare for subject indexes to mark person alone. Ninde subject indexes have a three-way contrast between first, second and third person, as well as inclusive and exclusive in the first person non-singular forms. Another three-way contrast in number is shown between singular, dual and plural. Subject indexes express information about the nominal or pronominal subject of a sentence, and occur whether or not there is a noun phrase subject.

Subject indexes are found affixed to the main verb in the verb complex. In this way, a core participant (S/A) is indexed on the verb (Haspelmath 2013, 5; Lichtenberk 1997, 301). Table 3.2 below shows the subject indexes.

	Singular		Dual	Plural
First Person	<i>na-</i>	Inclusive	<i>takh-</i>	<i>te-</i>
		Exclusive	<i>kha-</i>	<i>e-</i>
Second Person	<i>ku-</i>		<i>ka-</i>	<i>e-</i>
Third Person	<i>Ø-</i>		<i>rakh-</i>	<i>re-</i>

Table 3.2 Ninde Subject Indexes

Examples (3.6a), (3.6b) and (3.6c) show the third person subject indexes in transitive constructions. In each of the given examples, the subject index agrees in person and number with the subject of the clause.

- (3.6a) *Setoko Ø-mën nowoi.*
 S. 3SG-drink water
 ‘Setoko drinks water.’ [vnm03-ninde.wav 0 3.265]

- (3.6b) *Mari ma Pita ka rakh-wian titu selme.*
 M. CONJ P. ANA 3DU-have chicken 5
 ‘Mari and Peter have five chickens.’ [Story9.Ref002]

- (3.6c) *Nakha re-no ne-sumkho-iene*
 3PL 3PL-finish NOM1-cook-NOM2

ye re-kaqan.
 then 3PL-eat
 ‘They finished cooking and ate.’ [vnm25-ninde.wav 32.239 47.131]

As seen in the examples above, subject indexes are able to occur with a nominal or pronominal subject – or as Haspelmath (2013, 8) refers to them – cross-indexes. Subject indexes do not ‘agree’, but cross-reference the conominal when they occur in the same construction. However, in Ninde, subject cross-indexes are optional, as seen in example (3.6d) below.

- (3.6d) *Re-kël yakha netene kho.*
 3PL-dig.out all soil PL
 ‘They dug out all the soil.’ [Ninde_last weekend.wav 0 2.656]

Although most Ninde subject indexes can optionally occur alongside a conominal, the second person singular subject index *ku-* is unattested with a conominal. This means that either the index *ku-* occurs, or the second person singular independent subject pronoun occurs. Example (3.7a) shows the subject index *ku-* with no conominal, while (3.7b) shows the second person singular independent pronoun as subject, with no coreferential subject index bound to the verb.

- (3.7a) *Ku-yel* *kite* *tho*.
 2SG-carry 1PL.INCL go
 ‘You took us.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 262.646 269.886]

- (3.7b) *Nug=yel* *kamakh* *tho*.
 2SG=carry 1DU.EXCL go
 ‘You took us (two).’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 286.066 292.646]

A similar variation is shown between examples (3.8a) and (3.8b). Example (3.8a) shows the second person singular subject index affixed to the verb along with the negation prefix *s-*. (3.8b) shows the same negated verb with the second person singular independent pronoun acting as the subject, and no subject marking.

- (3.8a) *Ku-s-kholagre* *wei* *ku-p-li* *këne!*
 2SG -NEG1-can NEG2 2SG-FUT-see 1SG
 ‘You couldn’t see me.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref028]

- (3.8b) *Nug=s-kholagre* *wei* *ku-p-li* *këne!*
 2SG=NEG1-can NEG2 2SG-FUT-see 1SG
 ‘You couldn’t see me.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref032]

When a conominal is not permitted, the subject index stands ‘instead of’ a nominal. In this sense, they act truly pronominally. Haspelmath (2013, 10) refers to this type of index as a pro-index.

In some imperatives (§4.6), neither *nug* nor *ku-* appear. This is shown with the first verb, *lili* ‘look’ in example (3.9a) and the verb *subrou* in (3.9b).

- (3.9a) *p-li~li*¹⁵ *maqas* *metakhke* *ka* *ku-p-deden*.
 FUT-DUP~see well first then 2SG-FUT-dive
 ‘Look before you dive.’ [Year3Readers1.Ref001]

- (3.9b) *Subrou* *tige*.
 toss this.one
 ‘Toss this one.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 452.101 461.852]

3.2 Tense

Ninde makes a distinction between future and nonfuture tense. Nonfuture tense is used with situations that occur in the past and the present or that habitually occur, while future tense is marked on a variety of verbs for events that have not yet occurred. Nonfuture tense is also used for commands and other events that have not yet come to fruition.

As stated previously, tense is marked by additional morphology after the subject index and before the head verb. Verbs in nonfuture tense are unmarked, while verbs in future tense receive the future tense marker *p(V)-*.

Examples (3.10a) and (3.10b) show the difference between two constructions whose temporal status are past (3.10a) and future (3.10b). Both constructions are identical except for their tense marking.

¹⁵ The morpheme *p-* is analysed as a future marker as the focus of the present research is simple clauses. In simple clauses, the morpheme is consistently future, although irrealis may be a potential analysis in complex or other clause types.

(3.10a) *Niye Ø-mën nowoi.*
 3SG 3SG-drink water
 ‘S/he drank water.’ [ninde_visualelicit.Ref005]

(3.510) *Niye Ø-p-mën nowoi.*
 3SG 3SG-FUT-drink water
 ‘S/he will drink water.’ [ninde_visualelicit.Ref007]

Examples (3.11a) and (3.11b) are both temporally located in the future, with (3.11a) in the positive and (3.11b) in the negative. While only (3.11b) receives negative morphology, *both* constructions receive the future tense morpheme *p(V)*- in the second person singular subject index.

(3.11a) *Ku-p-li laen.*
 2SG-FUT-see line
 ‘You will see a line.’ [Year3Readers5.Ref032]

(3.11b) *Ku-p-s-li wei këne.*
 2SG-FUT-NEG1-see NEG2 1SG
 ‘You will not see me.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref039]

3.3 Verb Classes

Ninde verbs fall into two main classes: transitive and intransitive. Intransitive verbs have one obligatory argument, while transitive constructions have two obligatory arguments. There are a number of inherently transitive and intransitive verbs, though additional morphology or morphological processes may cause the verb to undergo a change in valence. Some verbs with similar semantic value will have two suppletive forms: one transitive and one intransitive. For example, the

Ninde word for ‘eat’ or ‘consume’ has two different forms. The word *kaqan* ‘eat’ is intransitive in that it only takes one core argument, while *yen* ‘eat, consume’ is transitive as it takes two core arguments.

Examples (3.12a) and (3.12b) illustrate the difference in transitivity between *kaqan* and *yen*.

- (3.12a) *Nakha re-kaqan.*
 3PL 3PL-eat
 ‘They eat/they ate.’ [ninde_visualelicit01.Ref001]

- (3.12b) *Nakha re-yen melen.*
 3PL 3PL-eat melon
 ‘They eat/ate melon.’ [ninde_visualelicit01.Ref002]

While there do appear to be processes for Ninde verbs to undergo a change in transitivity (§3.4.2), there are no ditransitive verbs attested in the data thus far. Instead, the potential third participant is always marked as an oblique (noncore argument).

In example (3.13), the verb phrase *tiwokh* ‘read’ takes the agent *bubum* ‘grandfather’ as its subject, while the theme *nitiwokhyene* ‘story’ acts as the object. The recipient, represented here by the third person dual independent pronoun *rakh* is marked by the oblique *tele*. Further discussion of oblique marking is found in §4.2.

- (3.13) *Bubum Ø-tiwokh ni-tiwokh-yene a niye tele*
 grandfather 3SG-read NOM1-read-NOM2 H.GEN 3SG OBL

rakh.
 3DU
 ‘Grandfather read his story to them (two).’ [Year2Readers1.Ref024]

3.3.1 Active Intransitive Verbs

When clauses contain an intransitive verb, the single argument has the grammatical function S and is encoded as the subject. The subject is always found preverbally and is marked on the verb through a corresponding subject index (§3.1). While the intransitive constructions only require a verb and its single core argument, other material, such as locative phrases, can follow.

- (3.14) *Niye Ø-thogote.*
3SG 3SG-walk
'He walks.' [ninde_visualelicit03.Ref003]

As previously stated (§3.1), the single argument of the intransitive verb does not always need to be overtly expressed through a conominal. The person and number of the subject is expressed through the subject index.

- (3.14c) *Na-ninis.*
1SG-draw
'I draw.' [Story1.Ref006]

Example (3.15a) gives another prototypical example of an intransitive verb, *mětokh* 'sleep', following its single argument *niye*. An identical construction is shown in example (3.15b), but followed by a locative phrase, which is introduced by the preposition *kha*.

- (3.15a) *Niye Ø-mětokh.*
3SG 3SG-sleep
'He slept.' [dead.dog.Ref003]

- (3.15b) *Niye Ø-mětokh kha nei tuwa.*
 3SG 3SG-sleep on tree INDF
 ‘He slept on a tree.’ [vnm04-ninde.wav 2.919 8.278]

Another construction with a locative construction following the verb is found in example (3.16).

- (3.16) *Nakha re-sogokho le nakhaine.*
 3PL 3PL-play LOC garden
 ‘They play in the garden.’ [Story23.Ref006]

Some intransitive Ninde verbs have transitive counterparts. Examples of intransitive *kaqan* versus transitive *yen* were given previously in §3.3. The following examples illustrate how reduplication can be used to change the transitivity of the verb *mën* ‘drink’. When *mën* ‘drink’ is reduplicated, it undergoes a valence reduction and becomes intransitive. Reduplication is discussed further in §3.4.2.

- (3.17a) *Niye Ø-mën nowoi.*
 3PL 3SG-drink water
 ‘S/he drinks water.’ [ninde_visualelicit05]

- (3.17b) *Nakha re-mën~mën.*
 3PL 3PL-DUP~drink
 ‘They drink.’ [ninde_visualelicit06]

3.3.2 Stative Intransitive Verbs

Stative verbs are recognised as a subclass of intransitive verbs in Ninde. Stative verbs act similarly to intransitive verbs and in addition, they are able to occur in relative clauses in order to modify nouns adjectivally. These relative clauses can

be marked by a zero morpheme or the special relativiser *t(V)*, which is often abbreviated to *t-*. Further information regarding relative clauses can be found in §7.2.

Example 3.18a shows the stative verb *tokh* ‘stay’ in an intransitive construction.

- (3.18a) *Nemengakhai Ø-tokh.*
 flying.fox 3SG-stay
 ‘There was a flying fox.’ Lt. ‘Flying fox stayed/lived.’ [vnm04-ninde.wav 2.919 8.278]

Examples (3.18b) and (3.18c) show the difference between a stative verb used in the verbal position versus use of a stative verb in a relative clause.

- (3.18b) *Nalpepe ge ka Ø-melkëse.*
 butterfly PROX ANA 3SG-be.blue
 ‘The butterfly is blue.’ [Story4.Ref006]

- (3.18c) *Na-khokho nalpepe tē-Ø-melkëse.*
 1SG-like butterfly REL-3SG-be.blue
 ‘I like the blue butterfly.’ Lt. ‘I like the butterfly that is blue.’ [Story4.Ref007]

A similar comparison is shown between examples (3.19a) and (3.19b).

- (3.19a) *Niye Ø-tab.*
 3SG 3SG-be.fat
 ‘She is fat.’ [Year2Reader2.Ref008]

(3.19b) *Na-khokho numgut nene nete t-Ø-lepe t-Ø-miathe*
 1SG-like rooster REL-3SG-be.big REL-3SG-be.red

t-Ø-tab soq t-Ø-pakhap a këne.
 REL-3SG-be.fat CONJ REL-3SG-be.tall H.GEN 1SG

‘I like my big, red, fat and tall rooster.’ Lt. ‘I like the rooster that is big, that is red, that is fat and that is tall, of mine.’ [Year2.Reader2.Ref009]

Stative verbs that occur within relative clauses are still marked for agreement by the appropriate subject index: either the third person singular *Ø-* or third person plural *re-*. Within the current corpus, the future marker *p-* is unattested within relative clauses.

Examples (3.20a) and (3.20b) both show the third person plural subject index *re-* affixed to the stative verb found within the relative clause of the larger noun phrase.

(3.20a) *nukhoi t-re-khote kho*
 leaf REL-3PL-be.mature PL
 ‘leaves that are mature’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 294.312 303.991]

(3.20b) *nokhpo t-re-da*
 thing REL-3PL-be.good
 ‘things that are good’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 537.809 546.445]

3.3.3 Transitive Verbs

Transitive verbs carry two core arguments. The first argument fulfils the grammatical function A and is encoded as the subject. This subject always precedes the verb. Like the S of an intransitive construction, this argument is signalled by an index on the verb. The second argument is prototypically the

patient with the grammatical function P and is encoded as the object. The object is always found after the verb.

The following examples show transitive constructions.

- (3.21a) *Nibiya Ø-yen luwo namate nge.*
 fire 3SG-consume DUR snake DIST
 ‘The fire consumed the snake.’ [Year2Readers1.Ref019]

- (3.21b) *Mamam a këne Ø-yel këne.*
 mum H.GEN 1SG 3SG-carry 1SG
 ‘My mum carried me.’ [Year3Readers1.Ref043]

Much like intransitive constructions, the nominal subject of a transitive construction does not need to be explicitly expressed. Examples (3.22a), (3.22b) and (3.22c) all show clauses with the same transitive verb: *yen* ‘eat’. Examples (3.22a) and (3.22b) both feature a conominal. Example (3.22a) *yen* is shown with the nominal subject *Roy*, while example (3.22b) takes a pronominal subject *niye* ‘3SG’. There is no nominal subject-or independent pronominal subject in example (3.22c). Instead, the first person singular subject index *na-* signals the subject of the clause.

- (3.22a) *Roi Ø-yen nanyene.*
 R. 3SG-eat food
 ‘Roy ate food.’ [vnm22-ninde.wav 42.467 59.685]

- (3.22b) *Niye Ø-yen nuduse nobuas nge.*
 3SG 3SG-eat piece meat DIST
 ‘He ate the piece of meat.’ [Year2Readers7.Ref014]

- (3.22c) *Na-yen titu.*
 1SG-eat chicken
 ‘I eat chicken.’ [Story2.Ref015]

Transitive constructions may have locative phrases that describe *where* an action takes place. These phrases follow the object rather than directly following the verb.

The following examples show transitive constructions followed by locative phrases.

- (3.23a) *Na-yel niye [p-ami.]*
 1SG-carry 3SG PREP-house
 ‘I carried him to the house.’ [dead.dog.Ref005]

- (3.23b) *Niye Ø-tu nowogonei a niye [kha naou.]*
 3SG 3SG-put canoe H.GEN 3SG on reef
 ‘He put his canoe on the reef.’ [Year1Readers6.Ref004]

When forming an interrogative, the object position can be filled by the interrogative *de* ‘what’. Example (3.24) shows the transitive verb *yakh* ‘do’ with *kapokh* ‘dog’ as its subject. The object position is filled by the interrogative *de* to encode the meaning ‘What is the dog doing?’ or literally ‘The dog does what?’

- (3.24) *Kapokh Ø-yakh de?*
 dog 3SG-do what
 ‘What is the dog doing?’ Lt. ‘The dog does what?’ [Story16.Ref002]

Interrogatives are further discussed in §4.5.

3.3.4 Reflexives

Reflexive constructions in Ninde follow a simple pattern. Typically, an independent pronoun is used in object position. In these instances, the subject, subject index and object will all carry the same person and number value.

The following examples show reflexive constructions.

- (3.25a) *Nug=sēm nug.*
 2SG=chop 2SG
 ‘You cut yourself (with a knife).’ [ninde_visualelicit02.Ref011]

- (3.25b) *Niye Ø-sēm niye.*
 3SG 3SG-chop 3SG
 ‘He cut himself.’ [ninde_visualelicit.Ref011]

As in other Ninde clauses, a conominal is not required.

- (3.25c) *Na-sēm kēne.*
 1SG-chop 1SG
 ‘I cut myself.’ [ninde_visualelicit2.Ref011]

Nominal subjects (as opposed to pronominal) are also attested in reflexive constructions with the appropriate independent pronoun serving as the reflexive object.

- (3.25d) *Ari ma Momoa rakh-khokho rakh nap.*
 A. CONJ M. 3DU-like 3DU very
 ‘Ari and Momoa liked each other very much.’
 [Year1Readers3.Ref002]

3.4 Morphological Processes

3.4.1 Negation

Ninde has various strategies for expressing negation. The standard negation strategy is double negation (§3.4.1.1), comprising a prefix *s-* and postverbal particle *wei*. The negative particle *sēke* is also attested (§3.4.1.3). Further, there is a negative verb that appears to have the semantic value of a negative existential or ‘be not’ (§3.4.1.2). All three of these strategies are attested throughout the corpus, however it appears that only the first two (double negation and the negative particle) can be found together.

3.4.1.1 Double Negation

Ninde negation is most commonly expressed through a negative prefix and post verbal negative particle that are used together. The prefix element is realised as *s(V)-* and found before the verb root, but after the subject index and tense marking. The post verbal negative particle is realised as *wei*. To distinguish negative prefix and particle from other negative formulations, the negative prefix *s-* is glossed as ‘NEG1’ and the post verbal negative particle *wei* is glossed as ‘NEG2’.

The following examples show standard negation in intransitive (3.26a and b) and transitive (3.26c) constructions.

- (3.26a) *Ø-s-motne* *wei*.
3SG-NEG1-be.true NEG2
‘That’s not true.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref018]

- (3.26b) *Kamem* *e-s-ngalngal* *wei*.
1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL-NEG1-be.excited NEG2
‘We are not excited.’ [Year3Readers8.Ref020]

- (3.26c) *Ku-s-li* *wei* *këne!*
 2SG-NEG1-see NEG2 1SG
 ‘You don’t see me!’ [Year3Readers9.Ref039]

Example (3.27) shows the main clause verb receiving negative morphology. The second verb belongs to a complement phrase marked by the future tense marker.

- (3.27) *Nug=s-kholagre*¹⁶ *wei* [*ku-p-khup* *del* *kamem*].
 2SG=NEG1-be.able NEG2 2SG-FUT-go DUR 1PL.EXCL
 ‘You can’t run away from us.’ [Year3Readers8.Ref024]

Examples (3.28a) and (3.28b) provide evidence of the right edge of the verb complex. In both examples, the post verbal negative modifier *wei* follows postverbal modification.

- (3.28a) *Nanikot* *Ø-s-yen* *yakha* *maqas* *wei* *nge*.
 goat 3SG-NEG1-eat all well NEG2 3SG.O.INAN
 ‘The goat didn’t eat all of it.’ [vnm10-ninde.wav 52.099 67.416]

- (3.28b) *Sapoi* *ka* *Ø-s-khopbutei* *lagu* *wei*.
 paternal.aunt ANA 3SG-NEG1-run fast NEG2
 ‘Aunt does not run quickly.’ [Story6.Ref019]

Ninde possesses a copula verb *wi* ‘be’. Like other verbs, it can be negated.

- (3.29) *Niye* *Ø-s-wi* *wei* *nus*
 3SG 3SG-NEG1-COP NEG2 banana
 ‘It’s not a banana.’ [Story22.Ref02]

¹⁶ The symbol = is used in this example to represent a clitic. The second person plural pronoun *nug* is often used in the subject position without indexing of the verb. In this position, it acts as a clitic.

3.4.1.2 Negative Existential

There is also a verb that appears to have the semantic value of a negative existential, or ‘be not’. There are two forms of the negative existential attested throughout the data: *səske* and *skeske*. All forms are clearly related to the negative particle *sək* and ‘no’ word *səke*. The negative existential is distinguished from the negative particle, because as a verb it receives verbal marking (a subject index). It is glossed as ‘NEG.EXIST’.

Example (3.30a) shows the negative existential *skeske*. This literally translates to ‘the pipe is/was not’, but can be understood in English more clearly as ‘There was no pipe.’

(3.30a) *Paep Ø-skeske.*

pipe 3SG-NEG.EXIST

‘There was no pipe.’ Lt. ‘The pipe was not.’ [Year3Readers.Ref012]

Example (3.30b) shows the negative existential used with a plural subject. The subject *numgut* precedes the verb affixed with the third person plural subject marker *re-*. This literally translates to ‘People were not’.

(3.30b) *Numgut re-skeske kha nuwowokho nge.*

person 3PL-NEG.EXIST on offshore.island DIST

‘There was nobody on the island.’ Lt. ‘People were not on the island.’
[Year1Readers1.Ref010]

Example (3.30c) shows the negative existential in agreement with the third person singular subject. Like previous examples, this literally translates to ‘My naggaria is not’. In this example, the negative existential is used to express a semantically similar expression ‘my naggaria is gone’.

(3.30c) *Neitlo a këne Ø-skeske!*

k.o.plant H.GEN 1SG 3SG-NEG.EXIST

‘My naggaria is gone!’ Lt. ‘My naggaria is not!’ [Year3Reader.Ref038]

Examples (3.31a) and (3.31b) show the negative existential used in two expressions with subtle, but different meanings. In example 3.31a, the negative existential is used to express that the animal in question has no legs (and has never had legs).

(3.31a) *Namate tuwa ge. Nublene Ø-səske.*

snake INDF PROX leg 3SG-NEG.EXIST

‘Here is a snake. It has no legs.’ Lt. ‘Here is a snake. Its leg is not.’ [Story12.Ref008]

By contrast, example (3.31b) encodes an entity that is missing (or once existed, but now does not).

(3.31b) *Newakha niye te-Ø-mosne Ø-skeske.*

hand 3SG REL-3SG-be.right 3SG-NEG.EXIST

‘His right hand was missing.’ Lt. ‘His right hand is not.’ [vnm23-ninde.wav 2.352 19.922]

3.4.1.3 Negative Particle

There is a negative particle *sək*, clearly related to the negative existential, used within the verb complex. It only appears alongside standard negation (negative prefix *s-* affixed to the root verb and post verbal negative particle *wei* following). This negative particle appears to hold a negative continuous value, translating to ‘no more, anymore’. This particle may have a relationship with the perfective aspectual marker *saq*, as the action denoted by the verb has finished. The following examples show the usage of the negative particle *sək*.

(3.32a) *Rakh-s-wi sək wei kalane rakh.*
 3DU-NEG1-COP NEG.CONT NEG2 friend 3DU
 ‘They were not friends anymore.’ [vnm26-ninde.wav 23.577 42.549]

(3.32b) *Niye Ø-s-mia sək wei.*
 3SG 3SG-NEG1-be.sick NEG.CONT NEG2
 ‘He wasn’t sick anymore.’ [vnm22-ninde.wav 42.467 59.685]

(3.32c) *Tom ka niye Ø-s-mutotho sək wei.*
 T. ANA 3SG 3SG-NEG1-be.hungry NEG.CONT NEG2
 ‘Tom was never hungry again.’ [vnm23-ninde.wav 45.237 61.597]

(3.32d) *Nakha re-s-rang ras sək wei*
 3PL 3PL-NEG1-be.fancy EMPH NEG.CONT NEG2
 ‘They weren’t fancy anymore.’ [Year2Readers5.Ref012]

Related to the negative particle *sək* is the ‘no’ form *səke*. *Səke* is only attested either within interrogative constructions or in the response to such constructions.

(3.33) *Nemaqab ge Ø-kholagreme Ø-p-li nesəs*
 lizard PROX 3SG-be.able 3SG-FUT-see black.ant

ai səke?
 or no
 ‘Can lizard see the ants?’ Lt. ‘Lizard is able to see the ants or it is no?’
 [Story18.Ref003]

In example (3.34), *Sěke* is used to answer the question found directly before it.

- (3.34) *Niye Ø-wi namathap titu? Sěke.*
 3SG 3SG-COP egg chicken no
 ‘Is it a chicken egg? No.’ [Story22.Ref004]

There is also evidence of the negative particle fusing with the second element of the double negative marker *wei* as seen in (3.35).

- (3.35) *nakha re-s-tlepe skwei*
 3PL 3PL-NEG1-be.big NEG.PART.NEG2
 ‘they’re not any bigger’ [Year2Readers4.Ref012]

3.4.2 Reduplication

Reduplication is attested among Ninde verbs. It appears that one of the most common usages of reduplication is to encode aspectual meaning. The following reduplicative forms are attested in Ninde:

- | (3.36) Reduplicative Syllable Structure | Example |
|---|----------------------------------|
| CV | <i>ma~makhaq</i> ‘jump (CONT)’ |
| CCV | <i>spo~spo</i> ‘sit (CONT)’ |
| CVC | <i>měn~měn</i> ‘drink (INTRANS)’ |

Reduplication can encode a continuous, durative, iterative and other aspectual meaning.

This contrast can be seen with the verb *spo* ‘sit’ in examples (3.37a) and (3.37b). Example (3.37a) shows the root form, referring to a specific action that has since ended, while example (3.37b) encodes an action that was ongoing.

(3.37a) *Niye Ø-spo l-ami a niye.*
 3SG 3SG-sit LOC-house H.GEN 3SG
 ‘He sat inside his house.’ [vnm08-ninde.wav 15.757 27.386]

(3.37b) *Niye Ø-spo~spo lele nibinwane.*
 3SG 3SG-DUP~sit LOC sand
 ‘He was sitting on the sand.’ [Year2Readers7.Ref007]

Several more Ninde verbs demonstrate the same behaviour. The verb *kokh* ‘stay’ can undergo reduplication to show duration. Example (3.38a) shows the simplex form, while example (3.38b) shows the reduplicated form.

(3.38a) *Nakha re-kokh le nakhaine kho.*
 3PL 3PL-stay LOC garden PL
 ‘They are in their gardens. [Year3Readers7.Ref014]

(3.38b) *Re-ko~kokh me lele.*
 3PL-stay just LOC
 ‘They just stay inside.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 559.861 563.693]

Example (3.39a) illustrates a construction with the verb *makhaq* ‘jump’. Here, the verb refers to a single event, while the reduplicated form in (3.39b) encodes iterative aspect.

(3.39a) *Re-makhaq erei kha nei nge.*
 3PL-jump up on wood DIST
 ‘They jumped up on the wood.’ [Year1Readers1.Ref008]

(3.39b) *Re-ma~makhaq.*

3PL-DUP~jump

‘They were jumping.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 662.007 666.539]

One very commonly attested Ninde verb, both in its root form and reduplicated, is the sensory verb *kho*. When reduplicated, the strength of the feeling is emphasised. Compare the two usages in examples (3.40a) and (3.40b).

(3.40a) *Re-kho pelawas.*

3PL-SENSE bad

‘They hear badly/poorly.’ [Year2Readers5.Ref011]

(3.40b) *Kamakh ma lipos Ø-khokho pelawas nap.*

1DU.EXCL INCL cat 1DU.EXCL-SENSE bad very

‘We, including my cat, felt very bad.’ [vnm13-ninde.wav 34.607 46.709]

The semantic relationship between simplex and reduplicated verbs can be one of attenuation. Compare the following:

(3.41) *mes* ‘dead’

mesmes ‘quiet, still’

Valence decrease can also be signalled by reduplication. This is common among several Vanuatu languages¹⁷, where a class of transitive verbs can become intransitive through reduplication. The transitive verb *mën* with its two core arguments, and the reduplicated intransitive form *mënmën* were illustrated in §3.3.1 in examples (3.12a) and (3.12b) and repeated below as (3.41a) and (3.41b).

¹⁷ Reduplication for valence decrease is reported for Neverver (Barbour 2013: 277), Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001, 324-330) and Espiegle’s Bay (Holmes 2014, 71-73).

(3.41a) *Nakha re-kaqan.*
 3PL 3PL-eat
 ‘They eat/they ate.’ [ninde_visualelicit01.Ref001]

(3.41b) *Nakha re-yen melen.*
 3PL 3PL-eat melon
 ‘They eat/ate melon.’ [ninde_visualelicit01.Ref002]

The detransitive process can be seen in examples (3.43a) and (3.43b) with the verb *khuk* ‘fish’.

(3.43a) *Na-khuk nimiyathe a këne tuwa!*
 1SG-fish fish H.GEN 1SG INDF
 ‘I caught my fish!’ Lt. ‘I fished my fish!’ [Year1Readers.Ref017]

(3.43b) *Na-khu~khuk.*
 1SG-DUP~fish.
 ‘I fish.’ [Story1.Ref014]

As well as reduplication, Ninde verbs may show iconic repetition. This repetition indicates the duration of the verb. The more times a verb is repeated, the longer the temporal duration of the action.

(3.44a) *Ku-p-bilis¹⁸ mage.*
 2SG-FUT-dress like.this
 ‘You will dress it like this.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 512.747 521.392]

¹⁸ This excerpt comes from a conversation about how to make laplap. The verb *bilis* ‘dress’ refers adding certain foods (in this instance, cabbage) into the laplap. It could also be loosely translated into English as ‘spread’.

- (3.44b) *Bilis~bilis~bilis~bilis* *spokh le liwene.*
 DUP~DUP~DUP~dress reach LOC middle
 ‘(You) dress, dress, dress, dress until you reach the middle.’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 396.658 402.017]

This same process can be observed in examples (3.45a) and (3.45b) with the verb *tho* ‘go’.

- (3.45a) *Rakh-tho wokh tes.*
 3DU-go DIR ocean
 ‘They went to the beach.’ [Year2Readers7.Ref004]

- (3.45b) *Te-tho~tho~tho~tho~tho...*
 1PL.INCL-DUP~DUP~DUP~DUP~go
 ‘We went for ages...’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 673.085 679.161]

3.5 Verb Modification

Ninde has eight aspectual markers, including an intensifier, an attenuative marker, a limiter and others, that serve to modify inflected verbs. Members of this class are not attested as independent verbs in the current corpus, only as modifiers of verbs. A small set of adverbs is described in §3.5.9. There also appears to be at least one adverbial marker (§3.5.10).

Aspect allows a speaker different ways of viewing or conceptualising the internal temporal quality of a given event (Whaley 1997, 210; Comrie 1976, 3). Bhat (1999, 43) makes the distinction between tense and aspect as tense indicating the *temporal location* of an event, while aspect indicates the *temporal structure*. This temporal structure can refer to an event as on-going or completed, beginning, continuing or ending, etc. Ninde contains a series of post verbal markers to encode various aspectual meanings, including perfective (§3.5.1), durative (§3.5.2), continuative (§3.5.3), emphatic (§3.5.4), attenuative (§3.5.5), limiting

(§3.5.6) and repetitive (§3.5.7). These aspectual markers differ from clausal modifiers discussed in §4.3 in that they appear as part of the verb complex, before the object.

3.5.1 Perfective *saq*, *sakha* (PFV)

Saq and *sakha* are one of the most commonly attested aspectual markers in Ninde. They denote the perfective aspect. At this point, it is unclear whether *saq* and *sakha* are unique morphemes or two allomorphs of the same morpheme. For the purpose of this analysis, they are considered allomorphs as they function in the same way.

The following examples show the usage of the perfective *saq/sakha*.

- (3.46a) *Nabulwes Ø-tokh sakha lele nubulpe.*
truck 3SG-stay PFV LOC mud
‘The truck got stuck in the mud.’ [Story10.Ref003]

- (3.46b) *Nakha re-ti-tin¹⁹ saq re-yen maqas*
3PL 3PL-DUP~roast PFV 3PL-consume well
ge thakhap.
PROX afternoon
‘They roasted and ate well that afternoon.’ [Year2Reader1.Ref026]

- (3.46c) *Na-ti saq nge.*
1SG-say PFV 3SG.O.INAN
‘I said it.’ [Year3Readers9.024]

¹⁹ While the simplex version is not attested in the corpus, this verb appears to be a reduplicated form, as a function of reduplication is to encode the intransitive form of a typically transitive verb (§3.4.2).

Additionally, *saq* is attested following the verb *lagu* ‘fast’. In these instances, *lagu saq* acts as an adverb with the semantic value ‘quickly’. Examples (3.47a) and (3.47b) show *lagu saq* used as an adverb.

- (3.47a) *Lagu saq, niye Ø-khup-butei..*
fast PFV 3SG 3SG-go-on.legs
‘Quickly, she ran...’ [Year3Readers5Ref.019]

- (3.47b) *Na-deden p-thatane lagu saq.*
1SG-swim PREP-down fast PFV
‘I dove down quickly.’ [Year3Readers1.Ref028]

3.5.2 Durative *luwo* (DUR)

The aspectual marker *luwo* expresses duration. Like other aspectual markers, *luwo* can modify both transitive and intransitive verbs.

The following examples show the usage of the durative *luwo*.

- (3.48a) *Këne ka na-kha luwo...*
1SG ANA 1SG-work DUR
‘I kept working...’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 133.34 141.109]

- (3.48b) *...ye niye Ø-yen luwo nēbētep maile nga kairate.*
then 3SG 3SG-consume DUR pawpaw H.GEN rat
‘Then he was eating the rat’s pawpaw.’ [vnm09-ninde.wav 13.13 20.976]

- (3.48c) *Te-yakh luwo tuwa, te-tho*
 1PL.INCL-do DUR INDF 1PL.INCL-go
 ‘We were doing some work, then we went...’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 757.471 766.826]

3.5.3 Continuative *bei* (CONT)

The continuative marker *bei* expresses the meaning ‘still’. It is attested after both transitive and intransitive verbs.

The following examples show the usage of the continuative *bei*.

- (3.49a) *Wut niye Ø-wei bei*
 SUB 3SG 3SG-be.hard CONT
 ‘If it is still tough...’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 199.915 206.254]

- (3.49b) *Na-tokh bei lele nakhaine ya [kēne].*
 1SG-stay CONT LOC work H.GEN [1SG]
 ‘I was still at work.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 213.367 221.051]

- (3.49c) *Kamu e-pi-ti wokh bei nokhpo makhan ya.*
 2PL 2PL-FUT-say follow CONT thing tomorrow DISC
 ‘You all will be talking more tomorrow.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 736.445 741.806]

3.5.4 Emphatic *ras* (EMPH)

Ninde has a commonly occurring formative, *ras*, that acts to increase or intensify the degree of the situation expressed in the verb it follows. It is attested after both transitive and intransitive verbs, including stative verbs. The phrase *Ø-da ras* ‘it’s very good’ is a commonly used expression, especially in the closing of a conversation.

The following examples show the usage of the emphatic *ras*.

- (3.50a) *Niye Ø-ngalngal ras*
 3SG 3SG-be.happy EMPH
 ‘He was very happy.’ [vnm07-ninde.wav 24.083 31.565]
- (3.50b) *Niye Ø-tokh ras erei kha nei nge.*
 3SG 3SG-stay EMPH up on tree DIST
 ‘He stayed up on the tree!’ [Year1Readers7.Ref010]
- (3.50c) *Kamem e-khokho ras nakhaine nga kamem.*
 1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL-like EMPH garden H.GEN 1PL.EXCL
 ‘We really like our garden.’ [Story13.Ref008]
- (3.50d) *Re-wian ras nokhpo kho*
 3PL-have EMPH thing PL
 ‘They have a lot of things.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 530.188 537.809]
- (3.50e) *Ari Ø-li man ka Ø-s-da ras wei.*
 A. 3SG-see SUB ANA 3SG-NEG1-be.good EMPH NEG2
 ‘Ari saw that he wasn’t very good.’ [Year1Readers3.Ref021]

3.5.5 Attenuative *thathaq* (ATT)

The attenuative *thathaq* can be used to lessen the degree or severity of a verb. Examples (3.51a) and (3.51b) show the attenuative nature of *thathaq*. In both examples, the attenuative expresses that the given action was done ‘quietly’.

- (3.51a) *Niye Ø-spo thathaq.*
 3SG 3SG-sit ATT
 ‘He sits quietly.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref038]

- (3.51b) *Ø-worou thathaq sepme Ø-ti...*
 3SG-call.out ATT LIM 3SG-say
 ‘He called out quietly...’ [Year3Readers9.Ref020]

Thathaq combines with other verbs also, as shown in example (3.52).

- (3.52) *tokh ‘stay’ tokh thathaq ‘hide (SG.S)’*
 *kokh*²⁰ ‘stay’ *kokh thathaq ‘hide (PL.S)’*
 tiwokh ‘talk (to s.o.)’ tiwokh thathaq ‘whisper’

Example (3.53a) shows the commonly occurring *tokh thathaq* ‘hide’ used in context, followed by the plural form *kokh thathaq* in (3.53b).

- (3.53a) *...tkhait na-p-tokh thathaq.*
 when 1SG-FUT-stay ATT
 ‘...when I will hide.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref012]

- (3.53b) *Nkhat a këne kho ka re-kokh thathaq...*
 relative H.GEN 1SG PL ANA 3PL-stay ATT
 ‘All my relatives hid...’ [Year3Readers7.Ref030]

3.5.6 Limiter *sepme* (LIM)

The limiter *sepme* is used to encode the meaning ‘only’ or ‘just’. It is attested with both transitive and intransitive verbs in both future and nonfuture tense. It is almost always found immediately following the verb that it is limiting.

The following examples show the usage of the limiter *sepme*.

²⁰ This is the only lexeme attested that has consonant alternation to mark the number of the subject.

(3.54a) *Nowoi Ø-p-loulou sepme.*

water 3SG-FUT-be.small LIM

‘The water is only a little.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 198.302 199.915]

(3.54b) *Ka re-mitokh sepme kha nanabuwo sepme*

ANA 3PL-sleep LIM on bamboo LIM

ai netene sepme.

or ground LIM

‘They only sleep on just bamboo or just the ground.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 478.442 488.749]

(3.54c) *Rakh-thap sepme naqanyene nga këne te*

2DU-plant LIM food H.GEN 1SG SUB

na-p-an nakha

1SG-FUT-eat 3PL

‘They just planted food for me to eat.’ [Ninde_last weekend.wav 9.56 13.161]

(3.54d) *E-p-sing sepme kha newëkha numgut.*

1PL.EXCL-FUT-peel only INST hand person

‘Can we peel only with human hands?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 39.618 41.357]

The previous examples come from natural speech, while example (3.55) comes from a poem. Again, the limiter *sepme* is found after the verb *ruwokh* ‘think about’.

- (3.55) *Nakha re-ruwokh sepme nudusei ne nug.*
 3PL 3PL-think LIM timber NHUM.GEN 2SG
 ‘They care only for your timber.’ [Year3Readers8.Ref029]

Like other aspectual markers, the limiter *sepme* can also be compounded with some verbs in order to form an adverbial phrase. Example (3.56) shows *sepme* modifying the normally stative verb *lagu* ‘fast’ to encode the new meaning ‘quickly’.

- (3.56) *Lagu sepme netes Ø-tëbite.*
 fast LIM ocean 3SG-rise
 ‘Quickly, the ocean swelled.’ [Year3Readers2.Ref010]

3.5.7 Argument Quantifier *yakha* ‘all’

The argument quantifier *yakha* shares its form with the noun modifier *yakha* ‘all’. A similar pattern is found in Neverver (Barbour 2012). Argument quantifiers signal the ‘plurality of arguments belonging to the verb that it modifies’. In this way, it quantifies the participants, not the action/event (Barbour 2012, 216). In this role, it appears postverbally; however it also functions as a postnominal modifier whether with a nominal or pronominal head (see §7.5.3).

The following examples show *yakha* as the post-verbal argument quantifier.

- (3.57a) *Mite Ø-yen yakha nanyene nga lipos.*
 Black 3SG-consume all food H.GEN cat
 ‘Black ate all the cat’s food.’ [vnm26-ninde.wav 15.519 23.577]
- (3.57b) *Niye Ø-serute yakha neyakhte kho.*
 3SG 3SG-sweep all dirt PL
 ‘S/he swept all the dirt.’ [Year3Readers8.Ref004]

- (3.57c) ...awut Ø-s-yen yakha maqas wei nge.
 but 3SG-NEG1-eat all well NEG2 3SG.O.INAN
 ‘...but he did not eat all of the grass.’ [vnm10-ninde.wav 52.099 67.416]

3.5.8 *Lis* ‘again’

The repetitive marker *lis* is attested. The following examples illustrate the usage of *lis* as a post-verbal aspectual marker.

- (3.58a) Nalasne niye Ø-golou lis.
 sun 3SG 3SG-gather again
 ‘The sun woke up again.’ [Year2Readers6.Ref022]

- (3.58b) Yete, nute Ø-tokh thathaq lis.
 after.that 3SG 3SG-stay ATT again
 ‘After that, the place was quiet again.’ [Year3Readers7.Ref042]

- (3.58c) Pita Ø-wiwokh lis nge
 P. 3SG-count again 3SG.O.INAN
 ‘Peter counted them again.’ [Story9.Ref006]

- (3.58d) Takh-p-ligis lis newet.
 1DU.INCL-FUT-remove again stone.
 ‘We will remove the stones again.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 597.455 603.374]

3.5.9 *Adverbs*

There is a small set of lexical modifiers, or adverbs, attested in Ninde. The modifiers contribute to the manner by which a situation unfolds. Adverbs are attested post-verbally in the modifier position within the verb complex. While

maqas is only ever attested as an adverb, the other members of this class are also attested as independent stative verbs in simple clauses.

Though there are likely to be more, the adverbs attested in the corpus thus far include:

(3.59)	Adverb	Verbal Gloss	Adverbial Gloss
	<i>maqas</i>	n/a	‘well’
	<i>lagu</i>	‘be.fast’	‘fast’
	<i>dangdang</i>	‘be.slow’	‘slowly’
	<i>weisesekha</i>	‘be.hard, strong’	‘hard, strongly’

The following examples illustrate the usage of adverbs in Ninde.

- (3.60a) *Naqanyene nge kho re-mokh maqas nap.*
 food DIST PL 3PL-grow well very
 ‘The foods grew very well.’ [vnm12-ninde.wav 53.197 66.5253968254]

- (3.60b) *Sapoi ka Ø-s-khopbutei lagu wei.*
 paternal.aunt ANA 3SG-NEG1-run fast NEG2
 ‘Aunt does not run quickly.’ [Story6.Ref019]

- (3.60c) *Niye ka Ø-yele dangdang.*
 3SG ANA 3SG-fly slow
 ‘It flies slowly.’ [Story6.Ref021]

- (3.60d) *Kamem e-totkho weisekha.*
 1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL-push hard
 ‘We pushed hard.’ [Story10.Ref005]

3.5.10 Ordinal Numbers

Cardinal numbers are able to take the adverbial marker *w(V)-*, which indicates how many times an event occurred. The numbers *khwo* ‘two’ and *těl* ‘three’ in example (3.61a) become ‘two times’ and ‘three times’ in the forms *we-khwo* and *we- těl*. The expression *we-sei* ‘once’, illustrated in (3.61b) is used at the beginning of stories, much like ‘once upon a time’ in English.

(3.61a) *Nakha re-mul wa-khwo ai we-těl.*

3PL 3PL-shed.skin ADV-two or ADV-three

‘They shed their skin two or three times.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref011]

(3.61b) *We-sei, něbiomēs tuwa Ø-tokh.*

ADV-one shark INDF 3SG-stay

‘Once, there was a shark.’ Lt. ‘Once a shark stayed.’ [vnm05-ninde.wav 4.816 19.227]

4 Clause Structure

This section looks at the structure of clauses in Ninde with reference to the typology of clause structure given by Foley and Olson (1985). It will focus on verbal clauses, including single argument (intransitive) and two argument (transitive) clauses. Three argument (ditransitive) clauses are unattested in the Ninde corpus. The coding of noncore arguments and clausal modifiers will also be described, as well as interrogative, imperative and prohibitive constructions. The section will conclude with a brief description of nonverbal clauses.

Ninde word order follows basic SVO word order, with AVP in transitive constructions and SV in intransitive constructions. Like many other Oceanic and Malekula languages, Ninde verbs are marked for person and number with a subject index (§3.1).

A, S and P are grammatical functions used when describing verbs and their core arguments. The A-function is carried out by the agent/actor, and the P-function is carried out by the patient/undergoer. The S-function is carried out by the single argument of an intransitive verb (Payne 1997; Shopen 2007; Givón 2001). Ninde is a nominative/accusative language, which marks the single argument of an intransitive verb – or S-function – in the same way as the A-function of a transitive verb. There are two properties shared by S and A which distinguish them from P:

- S and A are found before the verb; P is found following the verb;
- Verbs are marked for person and number through prefixes that agree with the person and number of S or A, not P.

The following table and examples show the basic clause structure of transitive constructions in Ninde. The verb serves as the nucleus, which Lyons (1977, 442) describes as the “innermost layer of the clause”. The subject and object are the verb’s core arguments. Intransitive constructions still have a verb as its nucleus, but only the subject as its single core argument. Ninde shows no evidence of ditransitive constructions. The arguments of a verb are based on the lexical entries of the verb and determined each time a verb is selected as the nucleus (Foley and Olson 1985, 34). The outermost – or peripheral – layer consists of the core plus

noncore arguments, not determined by the valence of the verb. This layer is commonly filled by locative and other oblique noun phrases (Foley and Olsen 1985, 36).

<u>Periphery</u>	<u>Periphery</u>	<u>Core</u>	<u>Nucleus</u>	<u>Core</u>	<u>Periphery</u>	<u>Periphery</u>
ADJC²¹	ADJC	SUBJ	VERB	OBJ	OBL	ADJC

Table 4.1 Ninde Transitive Clause Structure

Example (4.1) shows an example of a simple transitive construction.

(4.1)	<table><tr><td>SUBJ</td></tr></table>	SUBJ	<table><tr><td>VERB</td></tr></table>	VERB	<table><tr><td>OBJ</td></tr></table>	OBJ
SUBJ						
VERB						
OBJ						
	<i>Setoko</i>	<i>Ø-mën</i>	<i>nowoi.</i>			
	S.	3SG-drink	water			
	‘Setoko drank water.’ [vnm03-ninde.wav 0 3.265]					

Example (4.2) shows a transitive construction with its two core arguments as well as a noncore argument, or oblique.

(4.2)	SUBJ		VERB	OBJ			OBLIQUE	
	<i>Bubum</i>	<i>Kalua</i>	<i>Ø-tiwokh</i>	<i>nitëwokhyene</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>niye</i>	<i>tele</i>	<i>rakh.</i>
	grandfather	K.	3SG-read	story	H.GEN	3SG	OBL	3DU
	‘Grandfather Kalua read his story to them (two).’ [Year2Readers1.Ref024]							

²¹ The term “adjunct” refers to Payne’s (2006, 297) definition. Payne favours the term “adjunct” over “complement”, because the term “complement” implies a completed state, while a phrase or clause does not express a complete thought “until all its complement positions are filled”. Adjuncts, however, attach to already complete clauses.

Example (4.3) illustrates a transitive construction with an adjunct clause.

(4.3)	SUBJ	VERB	OBJ	ADJUNCT		
	<i>Nug=</i>	<i>lipdu</i>	<i>kamem</i>	<i>tkhait</i>	<i>kamem</i>	<i>e-butotho.</i>
	2SG=	help	1PL.EXCL	when	1PL.EXCL	1PL.EXCL-be.hungry
	'You help us when we're hungry.' [Year3.Readers8.Ref025]					

Example (4.4) demonstrates a construction which contains optional material before and after the core. An adjunct phrase and adjunct clause precede the main clause, which contains two core arguments, and is followed by an optional prepositional phrase.

(4.4)	ADJUNCT		ADJUNCT		
	<i>We-sei</i>	<i>dubuko,</i>	<i>tkhai</i>	<i>nuwo</i>	<i>Ø-buo,</i>
	ADV-one	morning	when	rain	3SG-rain

SUBJ			VERB
<i>watakh</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>taktak</i>	<i>Ø-yel</i>
female	NHUM.GEN	duck	3SG-carry

OBJ				OBL	
<i>boiloulou</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>niye</i>	<i>kho</i>	<i>pele</i>	<i>nowoi.</i>
child	H.GEN	3SG	PL	into	river

'One morning, when it rained, the mother duck carried her children into the river.' [Year1Readers1.Ref002]

4.1.1 Single Argument Constructions – Intransitive

The sole argument of an intransitive construction is encoded grammatically as the subject, which is inflected on the verb with a subject index. Subject indexes agree with the subject in person and number. This is demonstrated in example (4.5a)

with a nominal subject and example (4.5b) with a pronominal subject. Example (4.5c) shows the verb marked for person and number without a lexical subject overtly expressed.

- (4.5a) *Pusuwokh wes re-kokh.*
 boy four 3PL-stay
 ‘The four boys stayed.’ [vnm16-ninde.wav 3.329 11.876]

- (4.5b) *Nakha re-kokh...*
 3PL 3PL-stay
 ‘They stayed.’ [Year3Readers7.Ref014]

- (4.5c) *Re-kokh...*
 3PL-stay
 ‘They stayed.’ [Story23.Ref008]

Intransitive constructions may encode noncore arguments in the oblique position, which occurs postverbally. Obliques are introduced by a preposition. Local nouns can occur as unmarked adjuncts.

Example (4.6) shows an intransitive construction with the oblique introduced by a preposition; example (4.7) shows an unmarked local noun as oblique.

- (4.6) *Nabulwes Ø-khup [kha nēbokhomen a këne].*
 truck 3SG-go on dog H.GEN 1SG
 ‘The truck went on my dog.’ [vnm13-ninde.wav 16.974 34.607]

- (4.7) *Duwai ka Ø-tho [thasogonei].*
 uncle ANA 3SG-go bush
 ‘Uncle went to the bush.’ [Story8.Ref014]

4.1.2 Two Argument Constructions – Transitive

In transitive clauses, there are two core arguments. The first is the actor/agent argument grammatically functioning as A and encoded as subject (Payne 1997; Shopen 2007; Givón 2001). It is always positioned preverbally and is inflected on the verb with a subject index. The patient/undergoer argument grammatically functioning as P is encoded in the object position following the verb. Ninde objects cannot be indexed on the verb. Objects follow transitive verbs with no additional marking.

Examples (4.8a), (4.8b) and (4.8c) show the transitive verb *yen* ‘consume/eat’ affixed with subject indexes that agree with the A-function of the given clauses, rather than the object. The A-functions of the transitive verbs are treated the same way as the S-functions of an intransitive verb, being preverbal and inflected on the verb with a subject index.

The following examples show transitive constructions with both arguments marked by brackets. Subjects are always preverbal, while objects are always postverbal.

- (4.8a) [Paepi nene nanpopou kho] re-yen [nuwokhoine].
baby NHUM.GEN caterpillar PL 3PL-consume leaf
‘The baby caterpillars ate the leaf.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref008]

- (4.8b) [Nakha] re-yen [melen].
3PL 3PL-consume melon
‘They ate melon.’ [ninde_visualelicit01.Ref002]

- (4.9) [Roi] Ø-yen [nanyene kho].
R. 3SG-consume food PL
‘Roy ate meals.’ [vnm22-ninde.wav 42.467 59.685]

As stated previously, the constructions with one core argument and two core arguments illustrate nominative/accusative morphosyntactic alignment, which codes S and A in the same way as nominative subject and P as accusative object (Payne 1997; Shopen 2007; Givón 2001).

4.2 Non-core Arguments

Noncore arguments, or obliques, are introduced by prepositions. The exception is local nouns, which require no additional morphology when found in intransitive constructions. Local nouns do take additional marking, however, in transitive constructions. If the prepositional object can be understood from previous contextual information, it can be gapped. The preposition, however, must remain.

Ninde has a closed set of prepositions that are utilised to introduce noncore arguments. As a head-initial language, Ninde prepositions act as the head of the phrase, appearing sequentially before their objects.

The most commonly attested prepositional phrase in Ninde is the locative phrase. These phrases help to place a person or object in space or time. In Ninde, locative phrases are introduced by a preposition.

The following prepositions are attested in the data and exemplified in (§4.2.1) to (§4.2.8) :

(4.10)	Preposition	Gloss
	<i>(le)le</i>	‘LOC’
	<i>pe</i>	‘to’
	<i>pele, plele</i>	‘into’
	<i>wokh</i>	‘DIR’
	<i>kha</i>	‘on’, ‘INST’
	<i>duwan</i>	‘COM’
	<i>wene</i>	‘under’
	<i>lou, thou</i>	‘over’
	<i>běta</i>	‘BENE’
	<i>tele</i> ²²	‘because, OBL’
	<i>nene, ne</i> ²³	‘nonhuman genitive’
	<i>a, ya, nga</i> ²⁴	‘human genitive’

4.2.1 *(le)le* ‘LOC’

The most common locative preposition attested in the data thus far is *le(le)*. *Le(le)* may only be followed by common nouns.

(4.11a)	<i>Nabulwes</i>	<i>Ø-tokh</i>	<i>sakha</i>	<i>lele</i>	<i>nubulpe.</i>
	truck	3SG-stay	PFV	LOC	mud
	‘The truck got stuck in the mud.’ [Story10.Ref003]				

²² See §5.2.3.

²³ See §7.4.4.

²⁴ See §7.4.3.

Locative phrases can occur in subordinate clauses as well. Example (4.11b) shows the locative phrase *le nakhaine* ‘in the garden’ within the larger sentential complement.

- (4.11b) *Kamem e-khokho te e-p-e le*
 1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL-like CMPL 1PL.EXCL-FUT-go LOC
nakhaine.
 garden
 ‘We like to go to the garden.’ [Story13.Ref002]

4.2.2 *p(V)*- ‘to’

The preposition *pe* is used to encode the specific semantic value of motion to a spatial location (encoded below as ‘to’). Examples (4.12a) and (4.12b) show prepositional phrases following the verb complex, which begin with the preposition *pe*.

- (4.12a) *Numgut yakha kho re-tho da~da pe misakha.*
 person all PL 3PL-go DUP~be.good to outside
 ‘All the people went nicely outside.’ [Year3Readers7.Ref043]

- (4.12b) *Na-wilye nowogonei tho pe nanakha t-aqat.*
 1SG-paddle canoe go to side REL-up
 ‘I paddled my canoe to the high side’ [vnm27-ninde.wav 2.425 18.167]

Although local nouns can occur without a preposition after intransitive verbs, after a transitive verb, a preposition is required. *Pe* is able to be affixed to local nouns for this purpose. In this process, its vowel is dropped from the preposition when the local noun is vowel initial.

- (4.13) *Re-yel* *nge* *p-ami*
 3PL-carry 3SG.O.INAN to-village
 ‘They carried it to the house.’ [Year2Readers1.Ref025]

It appears that the preposition *pe* and general locative *le* can combine into a novel preposition *pele* to denote the semantic value ‘into’. Examples (4.14a), (4.14b) and (4.14c) illustrate the usage of *pele*.

- (4.14a) *Ø-totkho* *nakha* *pele* *klasrum!*
 3SG-push 3PL into classroom
 ‘It pushed them into the classroom!’ [Year3Readers7.Ref017]

- (4.14b) *Niye* *Ø-lumus* *watakh* *nene* *taktak* *pele* *netes.*
 3SG 3SG-wash female NHUM.GEN duck into ocean
 ‘It swept the female duck into the ocean’ (of a river in flood).
 [Year1Readers1Ref.006]

- (4.14c) *Niwitou* *nene* *nuwokho* *neitëktëk* *re-pathe~pathe*
 colour NHUM.GEN leaf k.o.tree 3PL-DUP~change

le *melkëse* *pele* *ti-Ø-miathe*
 LOC green into REL-3SG-be.red
 ‘The colour of the neitektek leaves change from green into (colour) that is red.’ [Year2Readers3.Ref002]

4.2.3 *wokh* ‘DIR’

The preposition *wokh* acts as a directional preposition, meaning ‘around, near, along’. It shares its form with the verb *wokh* ‘follow’.

The following examples show *wokh* used as a preposition, found outside the verb complex. Examples (4.15a) and (4.15b) shows *wokh* following the postverbal markers.

- (4.15a) *Niye Ø-yele del~del wokh nēbēte niye.*
 3SG 3SG-fly DUP~ DUR DIR head 3SG
 ‘He flew around and around his head.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref032]

- (4.15b) *Nesogonei re-mokh nap wokh nami ya ne.*
 grass 3PL-grow very DIR house H.GEN 3SG
 ‘Grass grew all around his house.’ [vnm10-ninde.wav 4.976 23.005]

Because the preposition *wokh* shares its form with the verb which encodes ‘follow’, there can be ambiguity as to which form is being used if no postverbal modifiers occur. Examples (4.16a), (4.16b) and (4.16c) show *wokh* analysed as the directional, but in constructions where it could also be analysed as its verb form.

- (4.16a) *Tkahit niye Ø-yaqdep wokh nimitlu nge...*
 when 3SG 3SG-arrive DIR village DIST
 ‘When she arrived at the village...’ [Year3Readers5.Ref012]

- (4.16b) *tuwa Ø-tokh wokh nute pakhapyene*
 INDF 3SG-stay DIR cliff
 ‘One stayed on the cliff’

(4.16c) *Nakha re-khobutei wokh boiloulou t-Ø-lepe*
 3PL 3PL-run DIR/follow child REL-3SG-be.big

kho.

PL

‘They are running after the big children.’ [Story16.Ref006]

4.2.4 *kha* ‘on’, ‘INST’

The preposition *kha* has two functions. It can mean ‘on’. Its second function is as the instrument marker.

Examples (4.17a), (4.17b), (4.17c) and (4.17d) show prepositional phrases beginning with *kha*.

(4.17a) *Re-mitokh sepme kha nanabuwo.*

3PL-sleep LIM on bamboo

‘They sleep only on bamboo.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 478.442 488.749]

(4.17b) *Nëmet tuwa Ø-tawaq kha nubute këne.*

coconut INDF 3SG-fall on head 1SG

‘A coconut fell on my head.’ [Year1Readers3.Ref029]

(4.17c) *Niye Ø-tu nowogonei a niye kha naou.*

3SG 3SG-put canoe H.GEN 3SG on reef

‘He put his canoe on the reef.’ [Year1Readers6.Ref004]

(4.17d) *Niye Ø-wakha niye kha nanakha sei sepme.*

3SG 3SG-rub 3SG on side one LIM

‘He rubbed him on one side only.’ [Year1Readers3.Ref018]

The following examples show *kha* in its second function, serving as an instrument marker.

- (4.18a) *Takh-p-khokhoi nge kha nēbulyete.*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate 3SG.O.INAN INST laplap.grater
 ‘We (two) will grate it with a laplap grater.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 105.475 112.478]
- (4.18b) *Ku-p-wus tu~tu nge kha netel?*
 2SG-FUT-tie DUP~put 3SG.O.INAN INST rope
 ‘Will you tie it up with a rope?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 512.747 521.392]
- (4.18c) *Ø-subul nemen kha newet.*
 3SG-knock.down bird INST stone
 ‘He knocked down the bird with stones.’ [vnm09-ninde.wav 20.976 27.262]

4.2.5 *duwan* ‘COM’, ‘with’

The preposition *duwan* has a comitative function.

Examples (4.19a) and (4.19b) illustrate the usage of *duwan*.

- (4.19a) *Ku-p-pul duwan kamem.*
 2SG-FUT-come COM 1PL.EXCL
 ‘Come with us!’ [Story24.Ref001]

(4.19b) *Na-we lele nami nubulwulyene duwan sapoi*
 1SG-go LOC store COM paternal.aunt

ya këne.

H.GEN 1SG

‘I went to the store with my aunty.’ [Story17.Ref002]

Examples (4.20a) and (4.20b) illustrate phrasal inclusory constructions, overtly marked with the comitative preposition *duwan*. This type of construction appears to occur when there are three or more participants.

(4.20a) *Këne duwan newekhawekha a këne, kamem*
 1SG COM family H.GEN 1SG 1PL.EXCL

e-we wakhtes.

1PL.EXCL-go beach

‘I with my family, we went to the beach.’ [Story3.Ref002]

(4.20b) *Këne duwan bëlbël a këne, Lawa maq Wano*
 1SG COM friend H.GEN 1SG L. and W.

e-thogote kha naqao.

1PL.EXCL-walk on reef

‘I with my friends Lawa and Wano, we walked on the reef.’
 [Year3Readers1.Ref002]

While most attestations of *duwan* hold a comitative value, example (4.21) clearly shows an instrumental value. This pairing of comitative and instrumental meaning is shared with English *with*, which can signal either participant type.

- (4.21) *Këne na-p-wakha nug duwan nuduse nansupol.*
 1SG 1SG-FUT-rub 2SG with piece coral
 ‘I will rub you with a piece of coral.’ [Year1Readers3.Ref007]

4.2.6 *wene* ‘under’

The preposition *wene* is attested with the meaning ‘under’.

Examples (4.22a), (4.22b) and (4.22c) show constructions with prepositional phrases featuring *wene*.

- (4.22a) *Niye Ø-mitokh wene nei tuwa.*
 3SG 3SG-sleep under tree INDF
 ‘He slept under a tree.’ [dead.dog.Ref003]

- (4.22b) *Rakh-tu nge wene wil nene*
 3DU-put 3SG.O.INAN under wheel NHUM.GEN
nabulwes.
 truck
 ‘They (two) put it under the wheel of the truck.’ [Story10.Ref006]

- (4.22c) *Niye Ø-tokh lalaq wene newet tuwa.*
 3SG 3SG-hide under stone INDF
 ‘S/he’s hiding under a stone.’ [Story16.Ref005]

4.2.7 *lou, thou* ‘over’

The preposition with the semantic value ‘over’ holds two surface forms: [lou] and [ðou]. The phones [l] and [ð] have an allophonic relationship in some word-initial

environments. While *lou* appears to be the underlying form, *thou* is shown when recorded in the data.

Examples (4.23a), (4.23b) and (4.23c) illustrate the usage of the preposition *lou/thou*.

(4.23a) *Nakha re-lo lou nibētep maile sei.*
 3PL 3PL-go over pawpaw one
 ‘They went over one pawpaw.’ [Story18.Ref005]

(4.23b) *Nakha re-yele lou nitiwene kho.*
 3PL 3PL-fly over flower PL
 ‘They flew over the flowers.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref019]

(4.23c) *Nesēs ge kho re-thogote thou nausakhane tuwa.*
 black.ant PROX PL 3PL-walk over stick INDF
 ‘The ants walked over a stick.’ [Story18.Ref003]

4.2.8 *bēta* ‘BENE’

The preposition *bēta* signals the benefactor of the action in the main clause.

Examples (4.24a) and (4.24b) illustrate the usage of *bēta*.

(4.24a) *Kite te-p-lēp naqaine bēta nakha.*
 1PL.INCL 1PL.INCL-FUT-give food BENE 3PL
 ‘We will give food for them.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 292.646
 299.272]

(4.24b) ...*ka-p-yokh* *nakhaine* *t-Ø-loulou* *ge* *bëta*
 2SG-FUT-make garden REL-3SG-be.small PROX BENE

këne.

1SG

‘You make a garden that is small for me.’ [vnm12-ninde.wav 4.765 16.351]

4.3 Clausal Markers

There are a small number of clausal modifiers attested in the current corpus. Ninde clausal markers are attested after the verb and any object, and they modify the entire clause. They differ in this way from aspectual markers, discussed in §3.5, which appear as part of the verb complex, before the object.

4.3.1 *ya*

Ya is borrowed from Bislama, and functions as a clausal level ‘discourse particle’ (Crowley 2004, p. 196-197). In most constructions it contributes the meaning ‘here, now, this’ and it appears to be emphatic, like a verbal exclamation mark. In the corpus, it is most often found at the end of interrogatives.

The following examples illustrate the usage of the discourse particle *ya*.

(4.25a) *Tuwa* *re-s-moros* *ras* *wei* *ya?*
 INDF 3PL-NEG1-be.tattered EMPH NEG2 DISC

‘Are they not broken with holes now/here?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 334.355 336.418]

(4.25b) *Nakha* *re-yakh* *de* *ya?*
 3PL 3PL-do what DISC

‘What are they doing now/here?’ [Story16.Ref001]

(4.25c) *Na-khobētei nug ya.*

1SG-think 2SG DISC

‘I thought you were here.’ [Year3Readers5.Ref022]

In examples (4.25d) and (4.25e), the use of *ya* and the indigenous proximate determiner *ge* are compared at the end of the same interrogative.

(4.25d) *Ka de ya?*

ANA what DISC

‘What is it?’ Lt. ‘It what this?’ [Story22.Ref001]

(4.25d) *Ka de ge?*

ANA what PROX

‘What is it?’ Lt. ‘It what this?’ [Story05.Ref002]

4.3.2 *nap* ‘very’

The emphatic *nap* is a clausal modifier found after the object when present. It is similar in meaning to the emphatic *ras*, although *ras* functions as a postverbal modifier and is found before the object of a given clause (see §3.5.4). Example (4.26) shows the clausal marker *nap* after the object of a transitive clause.

(4.26) *Ari ma Momoa rakh-khokho rakh nap.*

A. CONJ M. 3DU-like 3DU very

‘Ari and Momoa liked each other very much.’ [Year1Readers3.Ref002]

Nap is found in a variety of intransitive constructions. Examples (4.27a), (4.27b) and (4.27c) show the use of *nap* in intransitive constructions.

- (4.27a) *Nakha re-morogo nap.*
 3PL 3PL-be.hungry very
 ‘They are very hungry.’ [vnm02-ninde.wav 5.383 15.302]
- (4.27b) *Setoko Ø-ngalngal nap*
 S. 3SG-be.happy very
 ‘Setoko was very happy.’ [vnm14-ninde.wav 31.295 39.143]
- (4.27c) *Nuwo Ø-buo nap.*
 rain 3SG-rain very
 ‘It rained a lot.’ [Year1Readers1.Ref003]

4.3.3 *sepme* ‘LIM’

The clausal marker *sepme* shares its form with the aspectual limiter. As an aspectual marker, *sepme* follows the verb it is limiting and precedes the object. As a clausal marker, it is found following the entire verb complex and its object. While *sepme* as an aspectual marker modifies the event expressed by the verb, *sepme* as a clausal modifier modifies the whole proposition expressed in the clause. The following examples illustrate the clausal modifying function of the limiter *sepme*. In each case, *sepme* is the final element of the clause, following a temporal expression in (4.28a), a prepositional phrase in (4.28b) and an intransitive verb in (4.28c).

- (4.28a) *Nathang ge ka Ø-tokh wokh aoa sei sepme.*
 wind PROX ANA 3SG-stay DIR hour one LIM
 ‘The wind just stayed one hour.’ [Year3Readers7.Ref041]

(4.28b) *Na-we lami ya këne sepme.*
 1SG-go inside H.GEN 1SG LIM
 ‘I am just going in my house.’ [Story15.Ref008]

(4.28c) *Nabulwes Ø-tokh sakha sepme.*
 truck 3SG-stay still LIM
 ‘The truck was just still stuck.’ [Story10.Ref004]

4.4 Locational Demonstratives

Ninde contains two locational demonstratives that encode locational meaning relative to the speaker or location of the speech event. They are positioned clause-finally, after any object. The two demonstratives are:

(4.29)	Deictic Marker	Gloss
	yage	‘motion toward’
	yeda	‘at location away’

Examples (4.30a) and (4.30b) show the locational demonstrative *yage* encoding ‘motion toward (the speaker)’.

(4.30a) *Te-tho pul aqat yage.*
 1PL.INCL-go come upward here
 ‘We came up here.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 320.289 336.516]

(4.30b) *Nabaq t-Ø-loulou, ku-p-pul yage.*
 turtle REL-3SG-be.small 2SG-FUT-come here
 ‘Small turtle, come here.’ [Year1Readers7.Ref008]

Examples (4.30c) and (4.30d) show the locational demonstrative *yeda* with encoding ‘at a location away (from the speaker)’.

(4.30c) *Nëmět ka Ø-kokh yeda.*
 coconut ANA 3SG-stay there
 ‘There is a coconut there (away).’ [Story13.Ref003]

(4.30d) *Te-tu sakha nabulwes a nug yeda.*
 1PL.INCL-go PFV vehicle H.GEN 2SG there
 ‘We left your car there.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 584.221 588.457]

Demonstratives are only attested with common nouns. However, a clausal marker identical in form to the proximate marker *ge* is used alongside common nouns as well as independent pronouns to encode ‘here, this is’.

The following examples show the usage of the clausal marker *ge*.

(4.31a) *Këne ge.*
 1SG PROX
 ‘This is me.’ Lt. ‘I here.’ [Story11.Ref007]

(4.31b) *nami a këne ge.*
 house H.GEN 1SG PROX
 ‘This/Here is my house.’ [Story11.Ref002]

(4.31c) *Bokhmen tuwa ge.*
 dog INDF PROX
 ‘This/Here is a dog.’ [Story12.Ref002]

4.5 Interrogatives

There are two types of interrogatives: polar questions (§4.5.1), which require a yes or no answer, and constituent questions (§4.5.2). Both types can be optionally preceded by the discourse particle *ka*, which is identical in form to the anaphoric *ka*²⁵ (examples of both forms are presented in §7.6).

4.5.1 Polar Questions

Most polar interrogative constructions in Ninde are grammatically identical to their declarative counterparts. The only difference between yes/no interrogatives in spoken language is voice inflection. While the current analysis is limited due to the size of the corpus, the sound files attest a rising intonation pattern with yes/no questions. Punctuation is used to distinguish between declarative and interrogative forms in written discourse with a full stop or a question mark. Polar interrogatives are attested in both positive and negative expressions.

Examples (4.32a) and (4.32b) show two polar interrogatives taken from written texts. They show the structure as identical to a declarative statement, the difference signalled only by punctuation.

- (4.32a) *Niye Ø-wi nus?*
3SG 3SG-COP banana
'Is it a banana?' Lt. 'It is a banana?' [Story22.Ref002]


- (4.32b) *Rakh-kokh wokh nami nubulwulyene?*
3DU-stay DIR store
'Are they (two) are at the store?' [Story23.Ref003]

²⁵ Further analysis could reveal these to be the same morpheme.


The following examples are taken from spoken language data and marked for rising intonation.

(4.33a)


E-gëlēm *nanyene* *kha* *nemesei?* *ai*
 1PL.EXCL-peel food INST knife or



e-gëlēm *ge* *kha* *nei* *ti-Ø-magal?*
 1PL.EXCL-peel PROX with wood REL-3SG-be.sharp



Maq *kha* *nanabuwo?*
 and INST bamboo



‘Do we peel food with a knife? Or do we peel it with wood that is sharp?
 And with bamboo?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 17.708 33.267]

(4.33b)


Tuwa *re-s-moros* *ras* *wei* *ya?*
 INDF 3PL-NEG1-be.tattered INTS NEG2 PFV



‘Are they not broken with holes?’ Lt. ‘They are not very tattered?’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 334.355 336.418]

The discourse particle *ka* can be utilised in polar interrogatives. The rising intonation pattern remains in interrogatives with the *ka* particle.


(4.34a)



Ka *nug=sēm* *me* *nesogonei?*
 DISC.INT 2SG=cut just grass
 ‘Did you just cut the grass?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 141.109 143.25]

(4.34b)

Ka *kamokh* *ka-li* *me* *nimiyathe*
 DISC.INT 2DU 2DU-see just fish



de *kho* *sene?*
 what PL anywhere
 ‘Did you both just see any fish anywhere?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 308.754 311.822]

4.5.2 Constituent Questions

Ninde has a series of constituent interrogative forms shown in Example 4.3.5.

(4.35)

Interrogative	Gloss
<i>de</i>	‘what’
<i>mene</i>	‘where’
<i>man mene, mamne</i>	‘how’
<i>telede</i>	‘why’
<i>wiye</i>	‘how much’

Much like yes/no questions, constituent questions are nearly syntactically identical to their declarative counterparts. Where they differ is in the usage of the constituent interrogative forms above. The chosen interrogative can take the place

of the grammatical subject, object or other positions about which are being enquired. Given the data thus far, it appears interrogatives can fill any grammatical relation that can be filled by a noun. The behaviour of each interrogative is discussed in the following sections.

4.5.3 *de* ‘what’

De is attested in the subject, object and prepositional object positions as shown in examples (4.36a), (4.36b) and (4.36c) below.

- (4.36a) *De Ø-wian wil?*
 what 3SG-have wheel
 ‘What has wheels?’ [Story20.Ref001]

- (4.36b) *Kabokh Ø-yokh de?*
 dog 3SG-do what
 ‘What is the dog doing?’ Lt. ‘The dog is doing what?’ [Story16.Ref002]

- (4.36c) *Takh-p-khokhai nge kha de ya?*
 1DU.INCL-FUT -grate 3SG.O.INAN INST what DISC
 ‘What will we grate the laplap with?’ Lt. ‘We will grate it with what?’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 97.819 99.465]

De is also attested in constructions with the interrogative particle *ka*. The structure remains the same with *ka* preceding it. Example (4.36d) illustrates two examples of an interrogative construction containing both *de* and the interrogative discourse particle *ka*.

- (4.36d) *Ka de Ø-lagu? Ka de Ø-dangdang?*
 DISC.INT what 3SG-be.fast DISC.INT what 3SG-be.slow?
 ‘What is fast? What is slow?’ [Story6.Ref017]

4.5.4 *mene* ‘where’

Examples (4.37a) and (4.37b) illustrate *mene* in the object position, while it fills the prepositional object position in examples (4.37c) and (4.37d).

- (4.37a) *Paep a këne Ø-tokh mene?*
 pipe H.GEN 1SG 3SG-stay where
 ‘Where is my pipe?’ Lt. ‘My pipe stays where?’ [Year3Readers4.Ref013]

- (4.37b) *Nug=man mene ya?*
 2SG=be.different where DISC
 ‘You are different where?’ [Year3Readers1.Ref041]

- (4.37c) *Paep nge Ø-tho pe mene ya?*
 pipe DIST 3SG-go PREP where DISC
 ‘Where did that pipe go now?’ Lt. ‘That pipe is going to where now?’
 [Year3Readers4.Ref015]

- (4.37d) *Nug pe mene?*
 2SG PREP where
 ‘Where are you going?’ Lt. ‘You to where?’ [Year3Readers4.Ref017]

When asking about the location of people, it is possible to simply name the person in question either before (4.37e) or after (4.37f) the interrogative *mene*.

- (4.37e) *Mene Susi?*
 where S.
 ‘Where’s Susi?’ [Story8.Ref002]

- (4.37f) *Nug mene?*
 2SG where
 ‘Where are you?’ [Year3Readers9.Ref034]

4.5.5 *man mene (mamne)* ‘how’

The interrogative *man mene*, and the reduced form *mamne*, ‘how’ takes the place of a stative verb in order to form an interrogative. This can be either within the typical verb complex (examples 4.38a and 4.38b) or within a relative clause (examples 4.38c and 4.38d) modifying a noun.

- (4.38a) *Nokhpo ge Ø-man mene?*
 thing PROX 3SG-how
 ‘How is it?’ [Story4.Ref001] Lt. ‘That thing is how?’

- (4.38b) *Tuwa t-liwene kho ka re-man mene ya?*
 INDF REL-middle PL ANA 3PL-how DISC
 ‘What do the ones in the middle look like?’ Lt. ‘The ones that are in the middle are how?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 329.471 332.581]

- (4.38c) *Nukhoi te man mene kho?*
 leaf REL how PL
 ‘What types of leaves?’ Lt. ‘Leaves that are how?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 294.312 303.991]

- (4.38d) *Nukhoi te man mene ye re-kokh thatane?*
 leaf REL how then 3PL-COP.PL downward
 ‘What kinds of leaves are placed on the bottom?’ Lt. ‘Leaves like how are downward?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 287.389 291.025]

Man mene is also attested in constructions with the discourse particle *ka*. In these instances, the interrogative construction is made up of a declarative statement

preceded by *ka* and followed by *man mene* as shown in examples (4.38e) and (4.38f).

- (4.38e) *Ka* *e-yokh* *nakha* *re-mimilum*
 DISC.INT 1PL.EXCL-make 3PL 3PL-be.soft

man mene?

how

‘How do we make them soft?’ Lt. ‘We make them be soft how?’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 186.999 193.259]

- (4.38f) *Ka* *e-kaqas* *nge* *man mene?*
 DISC.INT 1PL.EXCL-cook.in.leaves 3SG.O.INAN how

‘How do we cook them?’ Lt. ‘We cook (in leaves) them how?’ [wav
 Ninde_laplap.wav 490.296 494.518]

4.5.6 *telede* ‘why’

The interrogative *telede* ‘why’ is made up from two elements: *tele* ‘because’ and *de* ‘what’. Therefore, *telede* translates to ‘because of what’. *Telede* takes the place of the subordinate clause in a declarative statement. Because *tele* would typically introduce the subordinate clause, it is also possible that *de* simply takes the place of the subordinate clause after the subordinator *tele*. In either case, *telede* or *tele de* is found postverbally. This is illustrated in the following examples:

- (4.39a) *Nug=wul* *lagu* *telede?*
 2SG=come fast why

‘Why are you back so quickly?’ Lt. ‘You came quickly, why?’
 [Year3Readers4.Ref019]

(4.39b) *Nug=tokh te ku-witumo telede?*
 2SG=stay REL 2SG-laugh why
 ‘Why do you keep laughing?’ [Year3Readers4.Ref022]

The following example illustrates a construction with the interrogative discourse particle *ka*. Structurally, the rest of the interrogative remains the same.

(4.39c) *Ka Nug=tu sepme nesogonei man sepme ge*
 DISC.INT 2SG=put LIM grass SUB LIM PROX

telede?

why

‘Why did you just leave the grass there?’ Lt. ‘You just put the grass there why?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 158.597 163.002]

4.5.7 *nane* ‘who’

Initially, the interrogative *nane* ‘who’ was only attested in three instances in an elicited word list (referenced as [mwi_361] and [mwi_362]). The elicited form matches the elicitations of both Charpentier (1982) and Tryon (1976), who listed the word as *nane*. Recently, personal communication with Anniely Kaitip (February 2018) has provided another example (referenced as [pers. comm. 2.18]).

(4.40a) *Nane ya?*
 who DISC
 ‘Who’s that?’ [mwi_361]

(4.40b) *Nane kho ya?*
 who PL DISC
 ‘Who’re they?’ [mwi_364]

(4.40c) *Nug=tho duwan nane pe Fiji?*
 2SG=go COM who to F.
 ‘Who did you go with to Fiji?’ [pers. comm. 2.18]

4.5.8 *wiye* ‘how much’

The lexeme *wiye* ‘how much’ fills the subject position in order to form an interrogative. There are no examples of *wiye* used to mean ‘how many’ in the corpus, but this is likely to be a limitation of the corpus, rather than a restriction on *wiye*. The following constructions show *wiye* in the subject position.

(4.41a) *Wiye Ø-kha na-kha?*
 how.much 3SG-cost NOM1-cost
 ‘How much does it cost?’ Lt. ‘How much costs the price?’
 [Year2Readers9.Ref021]

(4.41b) *Wiye Ø-kha nariko te melkëse ne nug?*
 how.much 3SG-cost bean REL green NHUM.GEN 2SG
 ‘How much do your green beans cost?’ [Year2Readers9.Ref024]

When used with the discourse particle *ka*, *wiye* appears to move to the end of the construction, where the ordinal number would be found in a declarative statement.

(4.41c) *Ka e-swoi nge kha netes wiye?*
 INT 1PL.EXCL-splash 3SG.O.INAN INST ocean how.much
 ‘How many times do you have to sprinkle sea water?’ Lt. ‘We splash it with sea water how much?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 236.455 239.786]

4.5.9 Interrogative particle *ka*

As indicated in the previous sections, both yes/no (§4.5.1) and constituent questions (§4.5.2) can be formed using the interrogative particle *ka*, which shares its form with the anaphoric formulative. The interrogative particle differs grammatically from the anaphoric reference marker in that the latter is typically attested at the end of the noun phrase, whereas the interrogative marker is attested clause-initially. This helps to signal to the listener/reader that the following clause is a question. While both yes/no and constituent questions utilise this particle, it is more heavily attested among constituent questions in the corpus.

4.6 Imperatives and Prohibitives

Imperatives are constructions that command action. There are two types of imperative constructions in Ninde: positive and negative. Negative imperatives can also be referred to as prohibitives. Thus far, however, there is only one attested prohibitive. To date, all imperatives and the single prohibitive are constructed with the second person singular as the subject. No second person dual or plural imperative or prohibitive constructions are attested in the corpus.

Ninde imperatives follow the same format as future time declaratives. Those attested consist of a verb inflected with the second person singular subject marker, future tense marker and an optional object and/or prepositional phrase. The simplest command consists only of the inflected verb.

The following examples illustrate Ninde imperatives.

(4.42a) *Ku-p-kaqan.*

1SG-FUT-eat

‘Eat!’ [Story7.Ref013]

(4.42b) *Ku-p-lumus newekha nug.*

2SG-FUT-wash hand 2SG

‘Wash your hands’ [Story7.Ref009]

(4.42c) *Ku-p-pul duwan kamem.*

2SG-FUT-come COM 1PL.EXCL

‘Come with us!’ [Story24.Ref001]

The following example is the only recorded imperative in the corpus, so it is not possible to comment on the intonation pattern of these constructions.

(4.42d) *Ku-p-lëp luwo këne lele nowoi nge!*

2SG-FUT-take DUR 1SG LOC water DIST

‘Take me out of the river!’ [vnm11-ninde.wav 37.502 62.4052154195]

The lone example of a prohibitive in the corpus follows the same pattern with one difference: the addition of double negation, the standard negation strategy.

(4.43) *Ku-p-s-tu~tu wei këne!*

2SG-FUT-NEG1-DUP~put NEG2 1SG

‘Don’t leave me!’ [Year2Readers6.Ref014]

4.7 Non-verbal Clauses

Most main clauses in Ninde are verbal and have a subject indexed on the verb (§3.1); however, some nonverbal constructions are attested.

The following examples show Ninde nonverbal clauses.

(4.44a) *Tatai a këne ya.*

father H.GEN 1SG DISC

‘This is my father.’ Lt. ‘Father of mine this/here.’
[Year1Reader9.Ref002]

(4.44b) *Këne ge.*

1SG PROX

‘This is me.’ Lt. ‘I here’ [Story11.Ref007]

(4.44c) *Ka de ya?*

DISC.INT what DISC

‘What is it?’ Lt. ‘What this?’ [Story22.Ref001]

5 Complex Clause Structure

Clausal coordination (§5.1.1) in Ninde is achieved through a series of conjunctions, which can also be used for coordination on the phrasal level (§5.1.2). Subordination occurs through the use of relative clauses (§5.2.1), complement clauses (§5.2.2) or adverbial subordinate clauses (§5.2.3).

5.1 Coordination

Coordination in Ninde can happen at both the phrasal and clausal level. There is a closed set of coordinating conjunctions that are attested throughout the current corpus. Both *maq* ‘and’ and *ai* ‘or’ can be used in either phrasal or clausal level coordination. Thus far, the others are only attested at the clause level. A list of attested conjunctions thus far follows.

(5.1)	Conjunction	Gloss
	<i>maq</i>	‘and, with’
	<i>ai</i>	‘or’
	<i>ye</i>	‘then’
	<i>yete</i>	‘after.that’
	<i>awut</i>	‘but’

5.1.1 Clause Level

In Ninde, two clauses can be joined by a coordinator. The simplest form of coordination on a clausal level is illustrated in example (5.2a).

(5.2a) [*Niye Ø-khou*]

3SG 3SG-cry

[*ye niye Ø-su.*]

then 3SG 3SG-go.back

‘He cried then he left.’ [bad.dog.Ref005]

Examples (5.2b) and (5.2c) each show two coordinated clauses that form an interrogative.

(5.2b) [*Ku-p-wus tu~tu nge kha netel*]

2SG-FUT-tie.up DUP~put 3SG.O.INAN INST rope

[*ai e-p-tu netel wene?*]

or 2PL-FUT-put rope under

‘Will you tie it up with a rope or will you put rope underneath?’

[Ninde_laplap.wav 512.747 521.392]

(5.2c) [*E-gëläm naqanyene kha nemesei*]

1PL.EXCL-peel food INST knife

[*ai e-gëläm nge kha*

or 1PL.EXCL-peel 3SG.O.INAN INST

nei ti-Ø-magal?]

wood REL-3SG-be.sharp

‘Do we peel food with a knife or do we peel it with wood that is sharp?’

[Ninde_weekend past.wav 17.708 33.267]

Example (5.3) shows the first complex clause followed by the conjunction *ai* ‘or’, then the second complex clause reduplicated in the negative. Again, this strategy is used to form an interrogative.

(5.3) [*Nakha re-kho~kho ras nokhpo [wut ya*
 3PL 3PL-DUP~SENSE EMPH thing SUB H.GEN

nakha kho]]

3PL PL

[*ai re-s-kho~kho wei nokhpo [wut*
 or 3PL-NEG1-DUP~SENSE NEG2 thing SUB

ya nakha kho?]]

H.GEN 3PL PL

‘Do they really love their personal belongings or not?’ Lt. ‘They really love their things or they don’t love their things?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 518.188 528.601]

Example (5.4) shows coordination on both the clausal and phrasal level.

- (5.4) [*E-p-li nute nga nakha*]
 1PL.EXCL-FUT-see place H.GEN 3PL
- [*ai e-p-li makhsu [nokhpo kho, nei ya*
 or 1PL.EXCL-FUT-see everywhere thing PL tree H.GEN
- nakha kho ai nami ya nakha.]]*
 3PL PL or house H.GEN 3PL
- ‘We will see their places or we will see everywhere, all things, their trees or their houses.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 808.903 821.559]

Example (5.5) shows two clauses separated, in which the two cores share the undergoer, *Ari*.

- (5.5) [*Momoa Ø-wakha Ari*]
 M. 3SG-rub A.
- [*yete niye Ø-mepmep maqas.*]
 after.that 3SG 3SG-levelled well
- ‘Momoa rubbed Ari; after that, he was flattened well (of a flounder fish).’
 [Year1Readers3.Ref020]

5.1.2 Phrase Level

When coordination occurs at the phrasal level, a complex core argument acts as a single core. The most basic coordinating constructions consist of two single nouns conjoined by a conjunction. Example (5.6a) shows the two proper names *Mari* and *Pita* conjoined, which act together as the subject argument of the transitive verb.

(5.6a) [Mari maq Pita] ka rakh-wian titu selme.

M. and P. ANA 2DU-have chicken 5

‘Mari and Pita have five chickens.’ [Story9.Ref002]

Examples (5.6b) and (5.6c) show two noun phrases conjoined.

(5.6b) Netel nene nabathago ai netel ne nisa?

rope NHUM.GEN k.o.tree or rope NHUM.GEN anything

‘The burao ropes or any ropes?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 524.315 528.983]

(5.6c) Nukhoi t-re-khote kho ai nukhoi te man

leaf REL-3PL-be.mature PL or leaf REL SUB

re-man mene kho?

3PL-how PL

‘Leaves that are well matured or leaves that are like how?’

[Ninde_laplap.wav 294.312 303.991]

Coordination is not limited to clauses and noun phrases. Example (5.6d) shows two adverbial phrases conjoined.

(5.6d) Nakha re-mul wa-khuwo ai we-tël.

3PL 3PL-shed.skin ADV-2 or ADV-3

‘They shed their skin two or three times.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref011]

Throughout the data, there are also several attestations of multiple surface forms (lexemes or phrases) that hold the same semantic value being given. When this occurs, the forms are separated by the conjunction *ai* ‘or’. Example (5.6e) shows three variations for the word ‘creek’.

- (5.6e) *nubokhnu ai nowoi t-Ø-loulou ai*
 creek or water REL-3SG-be.small or
- nowoi t-Ø-takhke*
 water REL-3SG-collect
- ‘creek or creek or creek’ Lt. ‘creek or water that is small or water that collects’ [vnm03-ninde.wav 19.783 54.73]

5.2 Subordination

Ninde subordinate clauses can be classed as one of the following: relative (§5.2.1), complement (§5.2.2) or adverbial (§5.2.3). Relative and complement clauses typically receive overt marking. Relative clauses are marked by the subordinator *t(V)-*, while complement clauses are marked by the subordinator *man*. Adverbial clauses can be marked by either *tkhait* ‘when’ or the subordinates *man* or *tele*. *Man* can encode different semantic values based on the type of clause it introduces.

5.2.1 Relative Clauses

Relative clauses in Ninde provide additional information about the noun. They differ from complement and adverbial clauses, because they directly modify nouns. They are marked by the subordinator *t(v)-*, which is affixed to the beginning of the stative verb that follows it, before the subject index.

The following examples illustrate Ninde relative clauses. They follow the head noun and are marked by both gapping of the co-referential noun and the subordinator *t-*. The examples in this section all display stative intransitive verbs in the relative clause.

- (5.7a) *pusuwokh* [t-Ø-loulou]
 boy REL-3SG-be.small
 ‘small boy’ Lt. ‘boy that is small’ [broken.axe.Ref003]
- (5.7b) *Ø-wegakha* *nukhoine* [t-Ø-mem] *kho*
 3SG-remove leaf REL-3SG-be.dry PL
 ‘He removed the leaves that were dry.’ [vnm11-ninde.wav 17.185 28.029]
- (5.7c) *nathang* *t-Ø-ma~mathaq*
 wind REL-3SG-DUP~be.cold
 ‘cold wind’ Lt. ‘wind that is cold’ [Year3Readers8.Ref038]

Further discussion regarding relative clauses in Ninde can be found in the nominal modification section, in §7.2.

5.2.2 Complement Clauses

In Ninde, some verbs are able to take a sentence-like complement as their object. These complement clauses can be overtly marked by the subordinator *man* or simply follow the verb. There is also an example of *te* marking a complement clause (4.11b). When introducing complement clauses, the subordinator *man* encodes the semantic value ‘that’ in English.

- (5.8a) *Ari* *Ø-li* [*man* *niye* *ka*²⁶ *s-Ø-da*
 A. 3SG-see SUB 3SG ANA NEG1-3SG-be.good

ras *wei*].
 EMPH NEG2
 ‘Ari saw he wasn’t very good.’ [Year1Readers3.Ref021]

²⁶ Here, the anaphoric *ka* refers back to Ari.

(5.8b) *Nug=kho* [man niye Ø-lum].
 2SG=SENSE SUB 3SG 3SG-be.sweet
 ‘You feel that it is sweet.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 239.786 247.838]

(5.8c) *Na-kho* [man na-p-wian maqas ge].
 1SG-SENSE SUB 1SG-FUT-have well PROX
 ‘I longed to have these.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 415.083 423.783]

Another complement-taking verb is *khoda* ‘want’. When *khoda* acts as the main clause verb before a complement clause, the verb in the complement clause will always be marked for future tense. This is illustrated in examples (5.8d) and (5.8e).

(5.8d) *Niye Ø-khoda* [Ø-p-li nesogonei].
 3SG 3SG-want 3SG-FUT-see grass
 ‘He didn’t want to see the grass.’ [vnm10-ninde.wav 23.005 41.613]

(5.8e) *Kitakh takh-khoda takh-p-yokh niyo...*
 1DU.INCL 1DU.INCL-want 1DU.INCL-FUT-make laplap
 ‘We wanted to make laplap...’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 70.325 78.371]

5.2.3 Adverbial Subordinate Clauses

There are two main types of subordinate adverbial clauses. The first helps to locate the proposition expressed in the main clause in time. The second type gives qualitative description of the verb. Each of these clauses has a unique subordinator to introduce the clause.

Temporal adverbial clauses encode the time of the main clause. They may precede or follow the main clause and are often marked by the subordinate *tkhai(t)* ‘when’.

The following examples show the temporal adverbial clauses in brackets.

- (5.9a) *Nuwo Ø-buwo nap [tkahit Ø-ti nge.]*
rain 3SG-rain EMPH when 3SG-say 3SG.O.INAN
‘It was raining hard when she said it.’ Lt. ‘The rain rained hard/heavily when she said it.’ [Year1Reader1.Ref003]
- (5.9b) *[Tkahit nakha re-mem,] ye poiwakh kho re-we...*
when 3PL 3PL-be.ripe then boy PL 3PL-go
‘When they were ripe, then the boys went...’ [vnm16-ninde.wav 33.53 43.07]

Example (5.9c) shows a subordinate temporal clause modifying another adverbial phrase.

- (5.9c) *We-sei dubuko [tkhai nuwo Ø-buo]...*
ADV-1 morning when rain 3SG-rain
‘One morning when it was raining...’ Lt. ‘One morning when the rain rained...’ [Year1Reader1.Ref002]

Adverbial clauses of reason are often introduced by the subordinating conjunction *tele*, which is attested with two related semantic values: ‘because’, ‘so’. *Tele* typically expresses a cause/effect or explanatory relationship between two clauses.

The following examples show the uses of *tele*.

- (5.10a) *Setoko Ø-ngalngal nap [tele nabulwes nge]*
S. 3SG-be.happy very because truck DIST

Ø-yokh nakhaiene thapo.]
3SG-do work many
‘Setoko was very happy, because that truck did lots of work.’ [vnm14-ninde.wav 31.295 39.143]

(5.10b) *Ku-p-swoi* nge *kha* *netes*
 2SG-FUT-splash 3SG.O.INAN INST ocean

[*tele* *niye* *Ø-p-lum.*]

because 3SG 3SG-FUT-be.sweet

‘You will splash it with sea water, because it will be sweet.’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 232.228 236.255]

(5.10c) *Na-wul* nge [*tele* *kite* *te-p-tho*
 1SG-pay 3SG.O.INAN so 1PL.INCL 1PL.INCL-FUT-go

lami.]

inside

‘I paid it so we could go inside.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 687.162
 689.384]

Qualitative adverbial clauses make a comparison or statement about the quality of a verb. These clauses are marked by the subordinator *man* or *tele*. In adverbial clauses, *man* holds the semantic value ‘like’ or ‘in the manner of’, while *tele* holds the semantic value ‘that’ or ‘because’.

The following examples show a phrase or clause marked in brackets. In each example, the adverbial makes comment about the quality of the main clause verb. Examples (5.11a) and (5.11b) show the adverbial material before the main clause.

(5.11a) [*Lagu* *sepme,*] *Leitau* *Ø-tho* *wokh* *tes.*
 fast LIM L. 3SG-go DIR ocean
 ‘Quickly, Leitau went to the beach.’ [Year1Readers7.Ref008]

(5.11b) [Man takh-rekh yakha nokhpo nge ka],
 SUB 1DU.INCL-do all thing DIST ANA

takh-p-wul nalse.

1DU.INCL-FUT-prepare firepit

‘Like we have done all those things, we will prepare the firepit.’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 129.377 145.188]

Examples (5.11c) shows the adverbial material following the main clause.

(5.11c) E-bilis [man Ø-mage, Ø-mage,
 1PL.EXCL-spread SUB 3SG-like.this 3SG-like.this

Ø-mage]...

3SG-like.this

‘We spread like this way, this way, this way...’ [Ninde_laplap.wav
 272.811 282.903]

The following examples illustrate the usage of the subordinate *tele*. (5.12a) is in the past, while (5.12b) shows future tense.

(5.12a) Kamakh ma lipos Ø-kho~kho pelawas
 1DU.EXCL INCL cat 1DU.EXCL-DUP~SENSE bad

nap [tele kapokh Ø-mes.]

very because dog 3SG-be.dead

‘We, including my cat, felt very bad, because the dog was dead.’ [vnm13-ninde.wav 34.607 46.709]

- (5.12b) *Ku-p-swoi* *nge* *kha* *netes*
 2SG-FUT-splash 3SG.O.INAN INST ocean

[*tele* *niye* *Ø-p-lum.*]

so.that 3SG 3SG-FUT-be.sweet

‘You will splash it with sea water, so that it will be sweet.’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 232.228 236.455]

- (5.12c) *Niye* *Ø-we* *golo* *wokh* *nowoi*
 3SG 3SG-go look DIR water

[*tele* *Ø-mën* *nge.*]

SUB 3SG-drink 3SG.O.INAN

‘He went to look for water that he drank.’ [vnm03-ninde.wav 19.783 54.73]

- (5.12d) *Na-wul* *nge*
 1SG-pay 3SG.O.INAN

[*tele* *kite* *te-p-tho* *lami.*]

SUB 1PL.INCL 1PL.INCL-FUT-go inside

‘I paid it so we could go inside.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 687.162 689.384]

5.2.4 Pre-clausal Constructions

Independent pronouns that agree with the person and number of a head noun are attested following the given noun phrase. In this way, the pronoun restates the noun and refers to the same entity as the noun. Thus far, this pattern is attested with noun phrases in the subject position. In example 5.13, the third person independent pronoun *niye* follows the common noun phrase *nemep nene netes* ‘wave’.

- (5.13) *We-sei nemep nene netes, niye Ø- sēbrou*
 TMP- wave NHUM.GEN ocean 3SG 3SG-cast.away
 1
- netēp wokhtes lele nēbunwane*
 conch beach LOC sand
- ‘Once, a wave pulled the conch ashore.’ [vnm01-ninde.wav 5.973 20.18]

In example 5.14, the first plural exclusive *kamem* is found after the noun phrase *kēne duwan newekhawekha a kēne* ‘my family and I’. The pronoun *kamem* refers back to both the head position participant *kēne* ‘1SG’ as well as *newekhawekha a kēne* ‘my family’, which is found as a prepositional object.

- (5.14) *kēne duwan newekhawekha a kēne, kamem*
 1SG COM family H.GEN 1SG 1PL.EXCL
- e-we wokhtes*
 1PL.EXCL-go beach
- ‘My family and I went to the beach.’ [Story3.Ref002]

Example (5.15) shows an even more complex example of *two* independent pronouns following the compound noun phrase. Because the noun phrase is compound, there are two head nouns. Here, *niye* refers back to the primary element of the compound noun phrase *kaiwut* ‘man’, while *rakh* refers back to the secondary nominal phrase *pusuwokh t-khuwo* ‘two boys’ or literally ‘boy that are two’. Both independent pronouns are then followed by a verb marked by a plural subject index, indicating three or more participants. (Subject indexes are discussed in §3.1).

(5.15) *kaiwut ma pusuwokh t-khuwo,²⁷ niye,*
 man CONJ boy REL-2 3SG

rakh re-we

3DU 3PL-go

‘the man and two boys went’ Lt. ‘man and boys that were two, he, they two, they all went’ [vnm25-ninde.wav 3.332 13.993]

5.3 Scope for further investigation

The grammar sketch presented in this section is limited. Due to the scope of the project, several topics were left unexplored. Verb serialisation is common among Malekula languages, including Neverver (Barbour 2012), V’ënen Taut (Dodd 2014) and Espiegle’s Bay (2014) among others. There is evidence of verb serialisation in Ninde, which has not been presented due to data and time constraints. An investigation into this topic would add to the greater understanding of the the verb complex.

Valency is another topic that warrants further investigation. A few examples were presented (§4.2.2 and §3.3.1) of strategies to add or remove participants in an event. There is room for a more detailed description of these strategies and investigation into other potential strategies.

There are some clausal markers that have not been mentioned as the primary focus of this project remaining on the noun phrase. Expanding the corpus with more recordings of natural speech will greatly benefit and improve the quality of the clause structure analysis.

²⁷ This is the sole example in the corpus of a relative clause without the plural subject index inflected on the verb. This may be because the verb is a numeral.

Part Three

Nominals and the Noun Phrase

6 Pronouns

The term *pronominal* is a useful cover term for independent personal pronouns as well as various dependent forms that behave semantically the same as, or similar to, independent forms (Lichtenberk 2000, 2). The general pattern shown among the pronominal systems of Oceanic languages involves a contrast between first, second and third person, with no distinction made for gender (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 69). With these contrasts, pronouns encode participants in discourse as speaker, addressee or a third-party.

Ninde pronouns include a closed set of lexemes, which is common among the majority of world languages (Siewierska 2004, 2). As is common in many other Vanuatu languages, such as Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001, 95) and South Efate (Thieberger 2006, 103), Ninde shows a three-way distinction in number: singular, dual and plural. This is also a regular trait of Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 35); however unlike several other Vanuatu languages, such as Sakao and Tolomako (Lynch & Crowley 2001, 48-49), Ninde has no trial or paucal pronouns.

While many Vanuatu languages have a three-way distinction in the number expressed by their pronominal forms, the well-documented languages of Malekula appear to have some variance in the pronominal systems. Some languages, such as Malua Bay (Wessels 2013, 69), Espiegle's Bay (Holmes 2014, 19) and V'ënen Taut (Dodd 2014, 91) distinguish only between singular and non-singular. Other languages, such as Neverver (Barbour 2012, 72), Nahavaq (Dimock 2009, 67), Naman (Crowley 2006, 56) and Neve'ei (Musgrave 2007, 29), follow the same pattern as Ninde in possessing the three-way distinction: singular, dual and plural. The three-way distinction is typical of canonic languages in Oceanic (Ross 2004,

498). It is possible that further distinctions (trial and paucal) once existed in Ninde but have fallen out of usage in more recent decades.²⁸

As is also common among Oceanic languages, the dual independent pronouns and subject pronouns contain an element historically related to the number ‘two’, which is *khuwo* in Ninde (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 35). The relation in Ninde appears to be phonological in nature. The initial phoneme in *khuwo* [x] appears as the final phoneme in all dual forms, whether independent pronoun (Table 2.1) or preverbal subject index (Table 3.2).

The Ninde pronominal system also expresses a distinction between inclusive and exclusive forms, which is typical - almost without exception - in Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 35; Ross 2004, 498).

Canonic Oceanic languages have four pronominal paradigms, each showing a different form, some of which are free forms while others are affixes or clitics. These four forms are: independent pronouns, possessor suffixes (on bound nouns and possessive classifiers), subject indexes and object indexes or pronouns (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 35; Ross 2004, 498). Ninde contains the first three of these pronominal paradigms. No object indexes have been identified. The possessor suffixes appear to be falling out of use. In the current corpus, only remnants of this system can be found (see §7.4.1).

6.1 Independent Personal Pronouns

Independent pronouns are used in noun phrases as the subject, object, possessor or prepositional object of a clause. The pronominal system consists of portmanteau morphemes marking both person and number, however gender is not marked. While there is a three-way person distinction between first, second and third person, there is also a series of indefinite pronouns that behave like the independent personal pronouns. All subjects, whether nominal or pronominal, are

²⁸ Charpentier (1982) notes paucal forms in his word lists, but these forms were unattested in both the natural speech and elicited pronoun lists of modern speakers. They are also unattested in the more recent grammar sketch written by Dimock, Greenback, Isno & Pearce (2001).

cross-referenced by the subject index expressing person and number found at the beginning of the verb stem (see §3.1). Because of this, both nominal and pronominal subjects are sometimes omitted from a sentence, as their meaning is understood from the verbal prefix. The full independent pronoun paradigm, including the indefinite pronouns, can be seen in Table 6.1 (duplicated from Table 2.1).

	Singular		Dual	Plural
First Person	<i>kēne</i>	Inclusive	<i>kitakh</i>	<i>kite</i>
		Exclusive	<i>kamakh</i>	<i>kamem</i>
Second Person	<i>nug</i>		<i>kamokh</i>	<i>kamu</i>
Third Person	<i>n(iy)e, nge</i>		<i>rakh</i>	<i>nakha</i>
Indefinite	<i>tuwa</i>		<i>(tuwa rakh)</i>	<i>(tuwa kho)²⁹</i>

Table 6.1 Ninde Independent Pronouns

The parentheses show the variation possible for the third person singular form. There appears to be some variation in the usage of the three forms *niye*, *ne* and *nge*. *Ne* is attested as a possessor and as the object of a preposition only. *Nge* is attested in object position. In contrast, *niye* is attested in all positions possible for a personal noun (subject, object, object of the preposition, possessor). It appears that the *ne* and *nge* forms are typically used when the referent is inanimate, while *niye* is used with animate referents (though a couple of exceptions do exist).

Occasionally, the third person dual pronoun is used as a dual number marker, in place of the numeral *khuwo* ‘two’. Example (6.1) shows the possessed noun *niblēle niye* ‘her leg’ modified by the independent pronoun *rakh* to mean ‘her two legs’.

²⁹ There are not separate dual and plural forms for the indefinite independent pronoun. Unlike the personal pronouns, *tuwa* can be marked by the same modification, including number marking, as common nouns. Therefore the dual and plural markers *rakh* and *kho* are attested in noun phrases with *tuwa* as the head, though nominal modifiers can be found before the plural marker. Indefinite pronouns are discussed in §6.2.

- (6.1) *niblēle* *niye* *rakh*
 leg 3SG two
 ‘her two legs’ [Year3Readers5.Ref029]

As stated previously, there appears to be a relationship between the lexical item *khuwo* ‘two’ and the pronouns expressing dual meaning. The dual form of each pronoun is formed by adding the initial phoneme *kh* to the end of the plural form of the pronoun, while the final vowel lowers. In the case of the first person plural exclusive pronoun *kamem*, the final consonant *m* is also dropped. The only form for which this system varies is the third person, whose dual pronoun *rakh* has a completely different initial consonant as its plural counterpart *nakha*. *Rakh*, however, is also the only independent pronoun that shares its form with the subject index found at the beginning of verbs, and it may be that the index has replaced the predictable pronoun form.

Generally, independent pronouns can be described as having the characteristics listed below. Each characteristic is marked with the section in which the characteristic is more thoroughly discussed.

- Independent pronouns can take the place of common and/or personal nouns (§6.1.1)
- Independent pronouns can act as the subject, object, prepositional object or possessor (§6.1.2)
- Independent pronouns can act as the subject of either transitive or intransitive verbs (§6.1.2)
- Plural independent pronouns can be modified by a quantifier (§6.1.3)
- Independent pronouns can follow a noun phrase (§6.1.4)

6.1.1 Pronouns in place of nouns

Independent pronouns are able to take the place of common and personal nouns, however there does not appear to be any evidence of independent pronouns replacing local nouns. Following is an example of the third person singular pronoun *niye* taking the place of the common noun *nowogonei* ‘canoe’ in the subsequent sentence.

(6.2) *Bot* *ka* *t-Ø-lepe,* *awut* *nowogonei*
 boat ANA REL-3SG-be.big but canoe

ka *Ø-s-lepe* *wei.*
 ANA 3SG-NEG1-be.big NEG2

Niye *ka* *t-Ø-loulou.*
 3SG ANA REL-3SG-be.small

‘The boat is big, but the canoe is not. It is small.’ [Story6.Ref010]

Ninde pronouns are also used to replace personal nouns. Personal nouns are discussed at further length in §8.1, and include a variety of kin terms, proper names and anthropomorphic nouns, commonly found in traditional stories. In example (6.3a), one of these anthropomorphic nouns, *nemaqab* ‘lizard’, is replaced by the third person pronoun *niye* in example (6.3b).

(6.3a) *Nemaqab* *ge* *Ø-kholagreme...*
 lizard PROX 3SG-be.able
 ‘The lizard can...’ [Story18.Ref003]

(6.3b) *Niye* *Ø-kholagreme...*
 3SG 3SG-be.able
 ‘It can...’ [Story18.Ref006]

In example (6.4a), the personal noun *Ari* (a name) is replaced with the same third person pronoun *niye* (example 6.4b).

(6.4a) *Ari* *Ø-li...*
 A. 3SG-see
 ‘Ari saw...’ [Year1Readers3.Ref021]

(6.4b) *Niye* *Ø-li*
 3SG 3SG-see
 ‘He saw...’ [Year1Readers3.Ref13]

Example (6.5) shows the third person plural pronoun *nakha* used as the subject of the same verb *li* ‘see’.

(6.5) *Nakha* *re-li*
 3PL 3PL-see
 ‘They see...’ [Year2Readers5.Ref004]

6.1.2 Pronoun Functions

Independent pronouns may act as the subject, object or prepositional object in a transitive construction as well as a possessor. Examples (6.6a-d) and (6.7a-d) show the first person singular pronoun *kēne* and third person plural pronoun *nakha* occupying each of these grammatical relations. When the pronoun functions as subject, there is also a subject index affixed to the verb. These indexes are described in detail in §3.1.

(6.6a) *Këne* as subject with index *na-*:

<i>Këne</i>	<i>na-tokh</i>	<i>lele</i>	<i>netes</i>
1SG	1SG-stay	LOC	sea

‘I live in the sea.’ [Story19.Ref002]

(6.6b) *Këne* as object:

<i>nawas</i>	<i>Ø-kakhas</i>	<i>këne</i>
wild.yam	3SG-irritate	1SG

‘The wild yam irritated me.’ [ninde_visualelicit3.Ref017]

(6.6c) *Këne* as prepositional object:

Na-khoda	ka-p-yokh	nakhaine	de	bëta	këne
1SG-want	2DU-FUT-make	garden	what	BENE	1SG

‘I want you to make a garden for me.’ [vnm12-ninde.wav 4.765 16.351]

(6.6d) *Këne* as possessor:

<i>nami</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>këne</i>
house	H.GEN	1SG

‘my house’ [Story11.Ref001]

(6.7a) *Nakha* as subject with index *re-*:

<i>Nakha</i>	<i>re-morogo</i>	<i>nap</i>
3PL	3PL-be.hungry	EMPH

‘They are very hungry.’ [vnm02-ninde.wav 5.383 15.302]

(6.7b) *Nakha* as object:

<i>Kal</i>	<i>Ø-we</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>Ø-yel</i>	<i>nakha</i>
K.	3SG-go	then	3SG-carry	3PL

‘Kal went and took them’ [vnm12-ninde.wav 53.197 66.5253968254]

(6.7c) *Nakha* as prepositional object:

<i>naqaine</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>te-p-lëp</i>	<i>bëta</i>	<i>nakha</i>
food	what	SUB	1PL.INCL-FUT-give	OBL	3PL

‘food that we give them.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 336.516 341.069]

(6.7d) *Nakha* as possessor:

<i>niyo</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>nakha</i>
laplap	H.GEN	3PL

‘their laplap’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 173.144 178.999]

Independent pronouns can precede either transitive or intransitive verbs as the subject, like their nominal counterparts. In examples (6.8a) and (6.8b), the first person plural inclusive pronoun *kite* is shown occupying the subject position in both intransitive and transitive constructions:

(6.8a) *Kite* *te-yadep*

1PL.INCL 1PL.INCL-arrive

‘we arrived...’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 292.646 299.272]

(6.8b) *Kite* *te-wian* *newëke*

1PL.INCL 1PL.INCL-have k.o.tree

‘We have the nakavika tree.’ [Year3Readers5.Ref037]

Examples (6.9a) and (6.9b) shows the second person plural pronoun *kamu* in both an intransitive and transitive construction.

- (6.9a) *Kamu* *e-we...*
 2PL 2PL-go
 ‘you go...’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 574.591 584.221]

- (6.9b) *Kamu* *e-p-bokh* *neb.*
 2PL 2PL-FUT-break firewood
 ‘You break firewood.’ [Year2Readers1.Ref004]

6.1.3 Pronoun + Quantifier

Ninde does not have separate pronominal postmodifiers to express a quantitative meaning. Instead, plural independent pronouns can be modified by some of the same quantifiers that modify their nominal counterparts. Due to the limited corpus, it is unclear if all quantifiers are able to be used in this way or only a select few. Most commonly attested are *yakha* ‘all’ and *tuwa* ‘indefinite’ which, as a modifier, means ‘some’. *Yakha* is attested modifying both common nouns and plural pronouns. Below, example (6.10a) shows the singular common noun *numgut* followed by the quantifier *yakha*. Examples (6.10b) and (6.10c) show the first person plural exclusive pronoun *kamem* and the third person plural pronoun *nakha* in the same kind of structure.

- (6.10a) *numgut* *yakha*
 person all
 ‘all the people’ [Year3Readers2.Ref013, et al.]

- (6.10b) *kamem* *yakha*
 1PL.EXCL all
 ‘all of us’ [Year3Readers7.Ref038]

(6.10c) *nakha* *yakha*
 3PL all
 ‘all of them’ [Year2Readers8.Ref017]

The indefinite quantifier *tuwa* is also attested throughout the data as modifying common nouns (whether singular or plural). In example (6.11a), the already plural noun *boiloulou* ‘children’ is modified in this way to convey the meaning ‘some children’. Example (6.11b) shows a similar construction with the indefinite *tuwa*. Here, *tuwa* modifies the third person plural pronoun *nakha* in order to identify an indefinite group of people.

(6.11a) *boiloulou* *tuwa*
 children INDF
 ‘some children’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 654.196 662.007]

(6.11b) *nakha* *tuwa*
 3PL INDF
 ‘some of them’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 341.069 351.376]

While *tuwa* can modify both plural nouns and pronouns, the current data set shows that only singular nouns, not singular pronouns, can be modified in this way. Examples (6.12) and (6.13) show common nouns modified by *tuwa*. The combination of a singular pronoun modified in this way (e.g. **niye tuwa* ‘a she’) would be semantically unlikely.

(6.12) *numgut* *tuwa*
 man INDF
 ‘a man’

(6.13)	<i>lipos</i>	<i>tuwa</i>
	cat	INDF
	‘a cat’	

6.2 Indefinite Independent Pronouns

Ninde has two indefinite independent pronouns: the singular *tuwa* and plural *yakha*. These pronouns are identical in form to the two Ninde quantifiers that carry the same meaning (discussed further in §7.5.3). Ninde indefinite pronouns display the following properties which distinguish them from other independent pronouns:

- Indefinite pronouns can take the place of either personal or common nouns (§6.2.1)
- Indefinite pronouns can be modified by a relative clause (§6.2.2)
- Number of the independent noun *tuwa* is not overt, but marked similarly to that of common nouns (§6.2.3)

The first property is shared with other independent pronouns, while the final two properties are unique to indefinite pronouns.

6.2.1 Indefinites in place of Nouns

Like other independent pronouns, indefinite pronouns can take the place of personal nouns. Examples (6.14) and (6.15) show the definite common noun *duwai* ‘uncle’ replaced by the indefinite *tuwa*, both followed by the possessive phrase *a këne* ‘of mine’.

- (6.14) *duwai* *a* *këne*
uncle H.GEN 1SG
‘my uncle’ Story3.Ref015

- (6.15) *tuwa* *a* *këne*
INDF H.GEN 1SG
‘one (uncle) of mine’ Story3.Ref007

Examples (6.16) and (6.17) show *tuwa* used in place of other kin terms, specifically *nathang* ‘sibling’ and *kala(ne)* ‘brother’, when there is more than one possible referent.

- (6.16) *tuwa* *a* *këne*
INDF H.GEN 1SG
‘one (sister) of mine’ [Year1Readers5.Ref004]

- (6.17) *tuwa* *a* *këne*.
INDF H.GEN 1SG
‘one (brother) of mine’ [Year1Readers5.Ref005]

Unlike other independent pronouns (with the exception of the third person forms), indefinite pronouns may also take the place of common nouns. Example (6.18) shows two sentences. In the second sentence, the indefinite pronoun *tuwa* takes

the place of the common noun *titu* ‘chicken’, found as the object in the first sentence.

- (6.18) *Pita Ø-wiwokh titu.*
 P. 3SG-count chicken
- T-mene tuwa Ø-miathe maq Ø-mēs?*
 PREP-where INDF 3SG-be.red CONJ 3SG-be.white
- ‘Pita counted the chickens. Where is the red and white one (chicken)?’
 [Story9.Ref004]

Example (6.19) shows the complex object noun phrase of the first clause replaced in the second clause by the pronominal phrase *yakha nge* ‘everything’.

- (6.19) *Niye Ø-li nomoi ma nokhpo le*
 3SG 3SG-see island.cabbage and thing LOC
- nibi, yete Ø-bul yakha nge.*
 pandanus.mat after.that 3SG-buy all DIST
- ‘He saw the island cabbage and things on the mat and after bought them all .’ [Year2Readers9.Ref013]

6.2.2 Indefinite + Relative Clause

Indefinite pronouns can be modified by a relative clause. Example (6.20) shows the indefinite *tuwa* modified by both a relative clause, non-verbal *t-liwene* ‘that are in the middle’, and the plural marker *kho*.

- (6.20) *[[tuwa [t-liwene]] kho]*
 INDF REL-LOC.middle PL
- ‘ones (leaves) in the middle’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 329.471 332.581]

Similarly, example (6.21) shows *yakha* modified by both a relative clause and the plural marker *kho*.

- (6.21) *Tkhait* *nug=ligis* [[*yakha* [*t-Ø-lepe*]]] *kho...*]
- when 2SG=remove all REL-3SG-be.big PL
- ‘When you have removed all the big ones (stones)...’ [Ninde_laplap.wav
563.693 576.308]

The two structures appear to have a similar meaning when *kho* ‘PL’ is attached.

Relative clauses are discussed in §7.2, while number marking is found in §7.5.

6.2.3 Indefinite + Number

Like most common nouns, the unmarked indefinite pronoun *tuwa* is singular. There are several strategies used to mark the number of common nouns (see §7.5). The indefinite independent pronoun *tuwa* utilises some of these strategies.

Example (6.22a) shows the third person dual independent pronoun *rakh* used as a number marker. The number marking follows the possessive *niye* with the common noun *niblële* ‘leg’ as the head noun.

- (6.22a) [[*niblële* *niye*] *rakh*]
- leg 3SG 3DU
- ‘his/her two legs [Year3Readers5.Ref029]

Similarly (6.22b) shows *tuwa* as the head followed by both a possessive phrase and the dual number marker *rakh*.

- (6.22b) [[*tuwa* *nga* *këne*] *rakh*]
 INDF H.GEN 1SG DU
 ‘two ones (uncles) of mine’ [Story3.Ref006]

Ninde nouns are marked by the plural marker *kho*, as seen in example (6.23a).

- (6.23a) *nesës* *kho*
 black.ant PL
 ‘black ants’ [Story18.Ref006]

Example (6.23b), repeated from (6.20) shows that when found in the head position, *tuwa* can also be marked as plural by the general marker *kho*. This example shows that **tuwa kho* is not simply the plural form of the indefinite pronoun, as a relative clause is found between these two elements. As is common in noun phrases, the general plural marker is found after other modifiers.

- (6.23b) [[*tuwa* [*t-liwene*]] *kho*]
 INDF REL-LOC.middle PL
 ‘ones (leaves) in the middle’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 329.471 332.581]

As is attested with common nouns, *tuwa* can also rely on the following subject index (part of the verb phrase) to mark its number. Example (6.24a) shows the singular noun *animol* ‘animal’ with no additional number marking. The following verb, however, is marked by the third person plural subject index *re-*, which signals that its subject is plural also.

(6.24a) *Animol re-bun saq lele netes.*
 animal 3PL-fill PFV LOC ocean
 ‘Animals live in the sea.’ Lt. ‘Animals fill inside the ocean.’
 [Story14.Ref002]

Example (6.24b) shows three instances of the indefinite *tuwa* utilising the same strategy. In all three instances, *tuwa* is followed by a stative verb marked by the third person plural *re-*.

(6.24b) *Tuwa re-lët, tuwa re- melkëse,*
 INDF 3PL-be.yellow some 3PL-be.blue

tuwa re-miathe.
 some 3PL-be.red
 ‘Some (butterflies) are yellow, some are blue, some are red.’
 Year2Readers4.Ref002

6.3 Inclusory Pronominals

Dual forms, whether inclusive or exclusive, can be followed by a lexical noun phrase to identify the participants involved. Lichtenberk calls the pronominal forms that identify the total set of participants “inclusory pronominals”. He does not use this term synonymously with “inclusive”, but to refer “specifically to independent personal pronouns that are inclusory” (2000, 2). The difference is that an inclusive pronoun includes the listener, while an inclusory pronominal reveals the participants in a dual relationship. This sometimes includes the listener, but as shown in the following examples, this grammatical process can be utilised in the third person as well.

In example (6.25), the included noun phrase *ma lipos* ‘and cat’ gives further information regarding who is included in the exclusive ‘we’.

- (6.25) *Kamakh ma lipos Ø-khokhokh*
 1DU.EXCL INC cat 1DU.EXCL-SENSORY
- (pelawas nap)*
 bad EMPH
- ‘We two, including the cat, felt (very bad).’ [vnm13-ninde.wav 34.607
 46.709]

This example clearly demonstrates Lichtenberk’s inclusory noun phrase, which is what he calls the “explicit” type. The explicit inclusory marker *ma* is directly related to and may be a variant form of the conjunction *maq*, which holds the semantic value ‘and’. This relationship is common cross-linguistically (Lichtenberk 2000, 4-5). Inclusory phrases, however, are not commonly attested in the Ninde corpus thus far. There are several attestations, however, of the third person dual pronoun *rakh* in an inclusory construction:

- (6.26) *maile rakh ma nanikot*
 white.man 3DU INC goat
- ‘The white man and the goat’ Lt. ‘the white man, they two, including the goat’ [vnm10-ninde.wav 0 4.976]

- (6.27) *lipos rakh ma bokhmen*
 cat 3DU INC dog
- ‘cat and dog’ Lt. ‘the cat, they two, including the dog’ [vnm13-ninde.wav 0 6.472]

These phrases can be found as either the subject or the object of the verb. There are no examples in the current corpus of this particular phenomenon occurring in the prepositional object position, however this is likely due to the limited corpus.

In example (6.28), the inclusory noun phrase is used as the subject of the verb *nawakh* ‘want’. Meanwhile, example (6.29) shows the inclusory noun phrase as the object of the verb *wian* ‘have’.

- (6.28) [mamam [rakh ma tatai]] ya niye
 mum 3DU INC dad H.GEN 3SG

rakh-s-nawakh niye
 3DU-NEG1-want 3SG
 ‘His mother and father didn’t want him.’ [vnm23-ninde.wav 19.922 29.927]

- (6.29) Na-wian [kapokh tuwa [rakh ma lipos tuwa]]
 1SG-have dog INDF 3DU INC cat INDF
 ‘I had a dog and a cat.’ [vnm13-ninde.wav 6.472 16.974]

6.4 Anaphoric *nge*

Ninde has a very productive anaphoric pronoun. It is used to refer to a noun or pronoun previously named and can be used in the object or oblique position, but is unattested in the subject position. Usage of the anaphoric pronoun is limited, however, in that it can only replace inanimate common nouns. In example (6.30), it replaces the independent pronoun *niye*, which is itself a reference to an inanimate common noun – *bokhmen tuwa mes* ‘a dead dog’ – found earlier in the story.

In the first example, *nge* refers to the pronoun *niye*, which, in turn, refers to the noun *bokhmen* ‘dog’, mentioned earlier in the story.

(6.30) *Na-yel niye p-ami.*
 1SG-carry 3SG PREP-village

Na-kawěk nge
 1SG-bury 3SG.O.INAN

‘I carried him home. I buried him.’ [dead.dog.Ref005]

In the following example, the same process occurs with the resumptive *nge* taking the place of the common noun *nesogonei* ‘grass’.

(6.31) *Nanikot nge Ø-yen me nesogonei*
 goat DIST 3SG-consume just grass

awut s-yen yakha maqas wei nge
 but NEG1-consume all well NEG2 3SG.O.INAN

‘The goat ate some of the grass, but did not eat all of it.’ [vnm10-ninde.wav 52.099 67.416]

In the following example, *nge* replaces the plural noun phrase ‘four small tins of fish’ in the immediately preceding clause.

(6.32) *Na-tu nge lele nede nga këne*
 1SG-put 3SG.O.INAN LOC basket H.GEN 1SG

‘I put them in my basket.’ [Story17.Ref003]

While *nge* can take the place of nouns regardless of number, there is one example of *nge* followed by the general plural marker *kho*.

(6.33) *Nakha re-tupo sesei nule nus wes.*
 3PL 3PL-separate seed banana 4

Nakha re-thap nge kho lele nakhaine.
 3PL 3PL-plant 3SG.O.INAN PL LOC garden
 ‘They separated four banana seedlings. They planted them in the garden.’
 [vnm16-ninde.wav 11.876 24.739]

6.5 Demonstrative Pronouns

A pair of demonstrative pronouns is also attested.

(6.34) Demonstrative Pronoun Gloss
tige ‘this.one’
tioge ‘that.one’

The demonstrative pronouns are related to the demonstrative *ge*, so further described in §7.3.1.

7 Common Nouns

Nouns are an open class in Ninde whose constituents give reference to things, people, locations and time. As with many other Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 37), there are three classes of nouns: common nouns (§7.1), personal nouns (§8.1) and local nouns (§8.2). Ninde is a head-initial language, meaning modifiers and constituents follow the head of a given phrase. This is common across many Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002). Common nouns in Ninde can be modified by a variety of constituents, such as relative clauses (§7.2), quantifiers (§7.5.3), numerals (§7.5.2) and demonstratives (§7.3). While some forms of nominal modification are found only with common nouns, possession can occur with all noun classes – though the possession strategies are limited according to the class. Nominal phrases in Ninde can be either simple (a single noun head with optional postmodifiers) or complex (two or more conjoined noun phrases with optional postmodifiers).

7.1 Common Noun properties

The class of common nouns is the largest of the noun classes in Ninde and it is continually growing through the addition of novel terminology and borrowings from other languages. The class of common nouns consists of most things that occur in one's surroundings such as plants, animals, buildings, instruments, tools and body parts, as well as abstract nouns.

Common nouns are able to take a variety of modifiers. Members of the Common Noun Class can be expected to have the following characteristics:

- Common nouns are typically marked by the initial sequence *nV*- (§7.1);
- Common nouns may act as the head of a noun phrase which functions as the subject or object of a verb, prepositional object (§7.1);
- Common nouns may be modified by a relative clause (§7.2), numeral (§7.5.2), quantifier (§7.5.3) or demonstrative determiner (§7.3);
- Inanimate common nouns may be replaced by the anaphoric pronoun *nge* (§6.4);

- Common nouns may follow the general locative *lele* to encode locational function (§7.7);
- Common nouns can occur in both possessor and possessed position in possessive association constructions (§7.4.4);
- Common nouns select the interrogative *de* ‘what’, which can also carry the common noun prefix (§7.8).

As is common with other Malekula languages, such as Neverver (Barbour 2012), Espiegle’s Bay (Holmes 2014) and V’ënen Taut (Dodd 2014), nearly all indigenous common nouns begin with the sequence *n(V)-*. This is understood to be a remnant of **na* or **a*, the hypothesized common noun article of eastern Proto Oceanic, from which the Malekula languages descend (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 71; Croweley 1985, 135). Like other Malekula languages, it appears that the *n(V)-* sequence has either fused with the noun itself or has been lost completely.

Below are examples of common nouns which show the initial *n(V)-* sequence is fused.

(7.1a) Common nouns beginning with *n(V)*-

<i>nabaq</i>	‘turtle’
<i>nami</i>	‘house’
<i>nelpute</i>	‘hair’
<i>nei</i>	‘tree’
<i>nēmēt</i>	‘coconut’
<i>nimiyathe</i>	‘fish’
<i>nibia</i>	‘fire’
<i>nibuas</i>	‘meat’
<i>nokhkum</i>	‘crab’
<i>nowoi</i>	‘water’
<i>nugut</i>	‘people’
<i>nule</i>	‘lightning’

Example (7.1b) illustrates a list of common nouns that are attested both with and without the *n(V)*- sequence, suggesting a morpheme boundary between the *n(V)*- sequence and noun root.

(7.1b) Common nouns with optional *n(V)*-

<i>nëbëtep</i>	<i>bëtep</i>	‘breadfruit’
<i>nëbëtep maile</i>	<i>bëtep</i>	‘pawpaw’
<i>nëbokhmen</i>	<i>bokhmen</i>	‘dog’
<i>netes</i>	<i>tes</i>	‘ocean’
<i>nataktak</i>	<i>taktak</i>	‘duck’ ³⁰

³⁰ *Taktak* is a borrowing from Bislama/English, but is found in the corpus both with and without the *n(V)*- nominal prefix.

Example (7.1c) shows nouns that begin with the phoneme /d/. The prenasalised alveolar plosive /d/ is realised as [ᵑd]. It is possible that the older prefix *n(V)-* has reduced, or simply been dropped from [nV-ᵑdV ____] to [ᵑdV ____].

(7.1c) Common nouns beginning with *d*
[ᵑd]

<i>dëkh</i>	‘poison’
<i>dëlängane</i>	‘ear’
<i>didì</i>	‘music’
<i>dam</i>	‘yam’

Example (7.1d) below shows the common nouns beginning with phoneme sequences other than *n(V)-* that do not also contain a variation of *n(V)-*. Among these nouns, *n(V)-* sequence has been lost.

(7.1d) Common nouns without initial *n(V)-*

<i>kapokh</i>	‘dog’
<i>bateniete</i>	‘whale’
<i>titu</i>	‘chicken’
<i>lipos</i>	‘cat’
<i>kairate</i>	‘rat’
<i>bëlbëḷ, kalane</i>	‘friend’
<i>gowase</i>	‘k.o.bird’
<i>kalmakhi</i>	‘gecko’

Crowley notes that Eastern Oceanic languages have four basic ‘types’ of usage in regards to the *nV-* prefix. Ninde appears to fit most closely with Type II. According to Crowley, Type II languages can be described as having:

A residual, non-productive system, involving a morphologically fused reflex of **na* or **a*, which is attached only before some nouns, and is possibly separable with some nouns, and is used only in some marginal constructions. (Crowley 1985, 161-162)

Presently, it does not appear that the *n(V)*- ‘NOM’ sequence is productively used with borrowed terms (although *na-taktak* is a possible exception). The examples in (7.1e) show more borrowed terms from Bislama and English that are found throughout the corpus without the nominal morpheme *nV*-.

(7.1e) Common nouns from borrowings

<i>melen</i>	‘melon’
<i>welfis</i>	‘whale’
<i>plet</i>	‘plate’
<i>ti</i>	‘tea’
<i>toti</i>	‘rubbish’
<i>krokotael</i>	‘crocodile’
<i>paket</i>	‘bucket, packet’
<i>tepol</i>	‘table’
<i>paip</i>	‘pipe’
<i>renbow</i>	‘rainbow’
<i>skul</i>	‘school’
<i>pepe</i>	‘book, paper’
<i>buluk</i>	‘cow’

While Ninde indeed takes *nV*- marking on the majority of its common nouns, it is not fused with all common nouns. Examples (7.1b), (7.1c) and (7.1d) provide evidence of the loss of productive *n(V)*- marking, which may be an influence from Bislama whose terms show no *n(V)*- marking.

Common nouns can act as the subject or object of a verb. They can also occur as the object of a preposition, including the locative preposition *le(le)*. The ability to

follow this locative sets common nouns apart from other noun classes. Further distinguished from other noun classes, common nouns are the only class of nouns attested in the ‘whole’ position of part-whole association. These relationships are marked by the genitive *nene*.

The following examples show the common noun *nei* ‘tree’ in all of these positions. First, example (7.2) shows *nei* as the subject of the stative verb *weisesakha* ‘be hard, strong’.

- (7.2) *Nei ka Ø-weisesakha.*
 tree ANA 3SG-be.hard
 ‘The tree is hard.’ [Story6.Ref004]

Example (7.3) shows *nei* followed by the plural marker *kho* as the object of the verb *wokhoi* ‘pull’.

- (7.3) *Niye Ø-wokhoi nei kho p-thatane.*
 3SG 3SG-pull tree PL PREP-down
 ‘It pulled the trees down.’ [Year3Reader8.Ref002]

Nei is followed by the indefinite *tuwa* and acts as the object of the preposition *kha* in example (7.4). The entire prepositional phrase is a locative phrase signalling where the subject was sleeping.

- (7.4) *Niye Ø-mëtokh kha nei tuwa.*
 3SG 3SG-sleep on tree INDF
 ‘It was sleeping on a tree.’ [wav vnm04-ninde.wav 2.919 8.278]

Example (7.5) shows *nei* modified by the relative clause *tloulou* ‘small’ and following the locative *le*. The entire prepositional phrase encodes where the man looked for the mosquito.

(7.5) *Gakh nge Ø-golo wokh nudukas le nei*
 man DIST 3SG-look DIR mosquito LOC tree

t-Ø-loulou.

REL-3SG-be.small

‘The man looked for the mosquito in a small tree.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref021]

Finally, example (7.6) shows *nei* filling the role of the possessum in the associative possession (§7.4.4) construction *nowol nene nei* ‘hole in/of the tree’; as the ‘whole’, *nei* follows the genitive *nene*.

(7.6) *nowol nene nei*
 hole NHUM.GEN tree
 ‘hole in/of the tree’ [Story19.Ref007]

Ninde possesses a series of postnominal modifiers found within the noun phrase. The following sections of this chapter describe the different types of common noun modifiers.

7.2 Relative Clauses

Relative clauses provide additional information about a noun and are a highly productive form of noun modification. They are attested modifying nouns that are the subject or object of a verb as well as prepositional objects. Relative clauses are only attested modifying common nouns or indefinite pronouns.³¹ Relative clauses are typically formed by the special relativiser *te*, which may be shortened to *t-*

³¹ The exception to this rule is when the terms *tlepe* ‘big’ and *tloulou* ‘small’ are used in the naming of kin terms, i.e. *sapoi tlepe* ‘paternal aunt, father’s older sister’ or *sapoi tloulou* ‘paternal aunt, father’s younger sister’.

followed by a stative verb. Examples (7.7a) and (7.7b) illustrate the difference between a noun and stative verb and noun and relative clause.

(7.7a) *Nute Ø-yowo ras.*
 place 3SG-be.hot EMPH
 ‘The place is very hot.’ [Story2Readers4.Ref002]

(7.7b) *nowoi [t-Ø-yowo]*
 water REL-3SG-be.hot
 ‘hot water’ Lt. ‘water that is hot’ [Story2.Ref019]

In example (7.7b), the relative clause is signalled by the optional relativiser *t-*. This is one of several strategies that Ninde uses to encode relativisation. The full list of relativising strategies include:

- Gapping/omission of co-referential noun phrase in relative clause;
- Anaphoric pronoun, *nge*;
- Special relativiser, *t(V)*³².

Example (7.8) shows a relative clause giving more information about the agent of the phrase *nēbiomēs tuwa* ‘a shark’. This is expressed through both the special relativiser *t-* and gapping.

(7.8) *nēbiomēs tuwa [t-Ø-limelwe lipos]*
 shark INDF REL-3SG-be.laughing.at cat
 ‘a shark that was laughing at cat’ [vnm05-ninde.wav 0 4.816]

Example (7.9) shows a similar grammatical construction, where the subject is gapped, though it is indexed on the verbal prefix *re-* ‘third person plural’.

³² While the special relativiser *t(V)* is attested as *te* in the written corpus, a shortened prefixed form *t-* is much more commonly attested in natural speech.

- (7.9) *nukhoi* [t-re-khote *kho*]
 leaf REL-3PL-be.mature PL
 ‘leaves that are mature’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 294.312 303.991]

Example (7.10) shows the relative clause *t-laq* ‘more’ modifying a prepositional object.

- (7.10) *le* [numokhoine t-Ø-laq]
 LOC day REL-3SG-be.more
 ‘on the next day’ Lt. ‘on the day that is more’ [Year3Readers7.Ref047]

Several relative clauses can modify a single head noun. In example (7.11), from a story translated from Bislama, speakers produced a structure with multiple relative clauses. Similar structures are not found in natural speech, where only one – or two at most – relative clauses would follow a noun.

- (7.11) *nete* [t-Ø-lepe] [t-Ø-miathe]
 hen REL-3SG-be.big REL-3SG-be.red

 [t-Ø-tab] *maq* [t-Ø-pakhap]
 REL-3SG-be.fat CONJ REL-3SG-be.tall
 ‘big, red, fat and tall hen’ [Year2Readers2.Ref012]

The anaphoric pronoun *nge* is associated with O function. Example (7.12) shows the head noun *nawane neitëktëk* ‘natapoa fruit’ modified by two relative clauses. The pronoun *nge* occurs in the position of the co-referential O in the second relative clause.

(7.12) *nawane neitëktëk tuwa kite*
 fruit k.o.tree INDF 1PL.INCL

[*te te-khokho ras*]
 REL 1PL.INCL-like EMPH

[*te te-p-an nge.*]
 REL 1PL.INCL-FUT-eat 3SG.O.INAN

‘our natapoa fruit that we really like, that we eat’ [Year2Readers3.Ref013]

As shown in the noun phrase structure (§2.2), relative clauses precede the human possessor. However, associative relationships (marked by *nene*) directly follow the head noun. This is illustrated in example (7.13).

(7.13) *Na-kho~kho numgut nene nete t-Ø-miathe nga*
 1SG-DUP~SENSE rooster REL-3SG-be.red H.GEN

këne.

1SG

‘I like my red rooster.’ [Year2Readers2.Ref003]

7.2.1 *Tlepe*

Many stative verbs are found within relative clauses, offering descriptive information about the head noun. The stative verb *lepe* ‘be big’ is among the most commonly occurring. It appears, however, that the relative marker *t-* has fused with its verbal root *lepe* so that in most instances of the verb, *tlepe* or *telepe* occurs with regular verbal inflections. Example (7.14) compares the stative forms *reloulou* ‘3PL are small’ to *re-tlepe* ‘3PL are big’.

- (7.14) *Tuwa ka re-loulou, tuwa ka re-tlepe*
 INDF ANA 3PL-be.small INDF ANA 3PL-be.big
 ‘some (pawpaw) are small, some are big’ [vnm28-ninde.wav 18.567 32.16]

Example (7.15) shows the verbal prefix before the relativiser *te*, suggesting *te* is part of the verb.

- (7.15) *Nakha re-telepe.*
 3PL 3PL-be.big
 ‘They are big.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref010]

Tlepe is almost exclusively attested in this form than without the *t(e)*- prefix. In fact, the only attestations of *lepe* ‘be.big’ without the modifying prefix *t(e)*- is in the negative, shown in (7.16a); however (7.16b) shows that the *t(e)*- prefix occurs in this environment as well.

- (7.16a) *bot ka Ø-s-lepe wei*
 boat ANA 3SG-NEG1-be.big NEG2
 ‘the boat is not big.’ [Story6.Ref010]

- (7.16b) *nakha re-s-tlepe skwei*
 3PL 3PL-NEG1-be.big NEG2
 ‘they’re not any bigger’ [Year2Readers4.Ref012]

Example (7.17) shows *tlepe*, again, acting as a verb and receiving the post-verbal modifier *ras*.

- (7.17) *Netes Ø-tlepe ras.*
 ocean 3SG-be.big EMPH
 ‘The ocean was too big.’ [Year1Readers6.Ref010]

Further proof that there may be a fusing of the *t-* morpheme to the verb *lepe* can be seen in examples (7.18) and (7.19). In example (7.18), the relative clause follows the head noun *nei* ‘tree’. The relativiser occurs as *te-*, and is followed by *tlepe* which behaves as an unanalysable root.

- (7.18) *nei* *te-Ø-tlepe* *nge*
 tree REL-3SG-be.big DIST
 ‘a big tree’ [vnm25-ninde.wav 13.993 32.239]

Finally, unlike other stative verbs, *tlepe* even keeps *t-* when taking additional morphological affixation in order to undergo nominalisation.

- (7.19) *ne-tlepe-yene*
 NOM1-be.big.-NOM2
 ‘size’ [Year3Readers8.Ref007]

A larger corpus may reveal other stative verbs that have fused with the relativiser.

7.2.2 *Local Nouns as Common Noun Modifiers*

Directional local nouns (§8.2.1) can also form a modifying structure like relative clauses. Like stative verbs, when local nouns are marked by the *t-* morpheme, they can be used to modify common nouns.³³ Most examples are placed immediately after the head noun, such as example (21a). Example (22a) shows local noun modification after a human possessor and indefinite marker, but still within the noun phrase, as it precedes the final number marker *kho*.

Example (7.20) shows the series of local nouns commonly used in relative clauses.

³³ A potential analysis for this behaviour may be that local nouns are acting as non-verbal predicates in a relative clause.

(7.20)	<i>t-erei</i>	‘upward’
	<i>t-thatane</i>	‘downward’
	<i>t-liwene</i>	‘middle’
	<i>ta-khaiwe</i>	‘uphill, far’
	<i>t-aqat</i>	‘up’

Example (7.21a) shows the local noun *erei* taking the special relativiser *t(V)*- in order to modify the common noun *nami* ‘house’.

(7.21a)	<i>nami</i>	[<i>t-erei</i>]	
	house	REL-upward	
	‘the house up there’ Lt. ‘house upward’ ‘[Story6.Ref011]		

Comparatively, example (7.21b) shows a typical occurrence of the unaffixed local noun *erei*, following the intransitive verb *thogote* ‘walk’.

(7.21b)	<i>Niye</i>	<i>Ø-thogote</i>	<i>erei</i>	<i>kha</i>	<i>nei.</i>
	3SG	3SG-walk	up	on	tree
	‘He walked up to the tree.’ [broken.axe.Ref003]				

A similar comparison is shown in examples (7.22a) and (7.22b) with the local noun *thatane* ‘downward’. Example (7.22a) shows *thatane* marked with the *t*-morpheme and modifying the head noun *nukhoi* ‘leaf’.

(7.22a)	<i>nukhoi</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>nug</i>	<i>tuwa</i>	[<i>t-thatane</i>]	<i>kho</i>
	leaf	H.GEN	2SG	INDF	REL-downward	PL
	‘some leaves of yours underneath’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 322.181 329.471]					

Example (7.22b) shows *thatane* acting as a local noun, as the oblique, following the transitive *sum* ‘fall’.

(7.22b) *Ye Ø-sum thatane lele nowoi.*
 then 3SG-fall downward LOC water
 ‘Then he fell down into the water.’ [vnm11-ninde.wav 28.029 37.502]

7.3 Demonstratives

Demonstratives help encode locational information. Like other nominal modifiers, demonstratives can be found modifying common nouns in the subject, object or prepositional object position, whether inanimate or animate, human or nonhuman. Example (7.23) shows the two Ninde demonstratives that translate as the proximal ‘this’ and the distal ‘that’. Demonstratives, like pronouns, are unmarked for gender but they are marked for number. Dual forms receive the dual affix *rakh*, while plural demonstratives receive the plural affix *kho*.

(7.23)	Gloss	Singular	Dual	Plural
	‘PROX’	<i>ge</i>	<i>(gerakh)</i> ³⁴	<i>gekho</i>
	‘DIST’	<i>nge</i>	<i>ngerakh</i>	<i>ngekhho</i>

The first two examples show the common noun *nabaq* ‘turtle’ modified by the proximate *ge* (7.24a) and distal *nge* (7.24b).

(7.24a) *nabaq ge*
 turtle PROX
 ‘this turtle’ [Story14.Ref007]

(7.24b) *nabaq nge*
 turtle DIST
 ‘that turtle’ [Year1Reader7.Ref005]

³⁴ This form is unattested in the current corpus.

The dual form of the proximate demonstrative *ge* is unattested in the current corpus. However, the distal form *ngerakh* is attested and shown in example (7.25).

- (7.25) *pen ngerakh*
 pen DIST.DU
 ‘those two pens’ [ninde_visualelicit03.Ref002]

The next set of examples shows the plural demonstratives: proximate *gekho* (7.26a) and distal *ngekho* (7.26b).

- (7.26a) *nimiyathe gekho*
 fish PROX.PL
 ‘these fish’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 314.34 320.289]

- (7.26b) *netnowokh nene lipos ngekho*
 3SG.child NHUM.GEN cat DIST.PL
 ‘those kittens’ [vnm02-ninde.wav 54.747 69.908]

A clausal marker identical in form to the proximate demonstrative *ge* is also attested. This marker is described in §4.4.

7.3.1 Demonstrative Pronouns

Ninde has two demonstrative pronouns that are related in form to the demonstrative *ge*. While the proximal *tige* ‘this one’ is attested in the corpus, the distal *tioge* ‘that one’ is only attested in an elicited list from the previous phonological project (Murray 2016). Therefore, only examples for proximal *tige*

are given. Thus far, it is attested in both subject and object position, and can take modification.

(7.27)	Demonstrative Pronoun	Gloss
	<i>tige</i>	‘this.one’
	<i>tioge</i>	‘that.one’

Example (7.28) shows the usage of the proximal demonstrative pronoun *tige*.

(7.28)	<i>Subrou</i>	<i>tige</i> .
	toss	this.one
	‘Toss this one.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 452.101 461.852]	

Example (7.29) shows *tige* modified by the anaphoric reference marker *ka*.

(7.29)	<i>tige</i>	<i>ka</i>
	this.one	ANA
	‘this one’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 181.877 186.999]	

Example (7.30) shows *tige* modified by the general plural marker *kho*.

(7.30)	<i>tige</i>	<i>kho</i>
	this.one	PL
	‘those ones’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 468.494 478.442]	

7.4 Possession

Ninde displays three main possessive constructions: direct possession, indirect possession and associative possession. Each of these three possessive strategies is grammatically encoded distinctly within the language. No matter the type of

possession, possessed nouns can fill any syntactic position allowed by the head noun, including subject or object of the verb, as well the prepositional object.

7.4.1 *Direct (Inalienable) Possession*

Like most Oceanic languages, direct possession in Ninde is closely related to the inalienability of the possessed item (Ross 2004, 511). Haiman (1983, 816) succinctly states, ‘the linguistic distance between expressions corresponds to the conceptual distance between them’. In other words, through the absence of a possessive marker, directly possessed nouns occur next to their possessors, while indirectly possessed nouns are lexically separated from their possessors by a possessive marker. The most commonly attested directly possessed nouns in Ninde, as well as many other Oceanic languages, are body parts and kin terms. To express the inalienability of these relationships, Ninde utilises two strategies to reflect direct possession. There is evidence of the affixation of bound morphemes to express direct possession in Ninde. This strategy appears to be falling out of use as it is not consistently used throughout the corpus. The second is more consistently attested strategy utilised to reflect direct possession is a sequence of contiguous possessum + possessor.

Examples (7.31a) and (7.31b) show the common noun *něble* ‘leg’ directly possessed by the third person in both Ninde strategies: possessor affixation and a pronominal possessor. Example (7.31c) shows both strategies used in the same structure.

- (7.31a) *něble-ne*
leg-3POSS
‘her leg’ [Year3Readers5.Ref008]

- (7.31b) *něble* *niye*
leg 3SG
‘his leg’ [vnm23-ninde.wav 2.352 19.922]

- (7.31c) *něble-ne* *niye*
 leg-3POSS 3SG
 ‘her leg’ [Year3Readers5.Ref029]

Similarly, example (7.32a) shows the directly possessed form, consisting of the root noun *newěkha* ‘hand’ and third person possessive suffix *-ne*. Example (7.32b) shows the same possessed noun with the second direct possession strategy of *possessum + possessor*.

- (7.32a) *newěkha-ne*
 hand-3POSS
 ‘her hand’ [Year3Readers5.Ref008]

- (7.32b) *newěkha* *niye*
 hand 3SG
 ‘her hand’ [Story22.Ref004]

While many Oceanic and Malekula languages encode the possession of alienable body parts (such as hair) with indirect possession, Ninde can use direct possession. Example (7.33a) shows three instances of *nelpute* ‘hair’ directly possessed through the *possessum + possessor* structure. ‘His/her hair’ in (7.33b) shows direct possession with affixation.

- (7.33a) *nelpute nug* ‘your hair’
 nelpute niye ‘his/her hair’
 nelpute kamem ‘our hair’
 (7.33b) *nelpute-ne* ‘his/her hair’ hair-3SG.POSS

The Ninde direct possession suffixes show no distinction for gender within the modern corpus. As shown in examples (7.31a) and (7.32a), the third person direct possession marker is found with body parts; however, the first and second person direct possessive suffixes are unattested with body parts, and only independent pronouns occur. The attested possessive suffixes are presented in (7.34).

(7.34)	Suffix	Gloss
	<i>-ng</i>	1POSS
	<i>-m</i>	2POSS
	<i>-ne</i>	3POSS

Examples (7.35a) , (7.35b) and (7.35c) show two forms of possession of the kinship term *nesu-* ‘grandmother’. Unlike with body parts, the possessive marker *a* is found before the independent pronoun in (7.35b). This is also found in (7.35c), where the third person possessor *niye* is shown. Ross states that languages vary in that many have nouns that can fall into both major classes, alienable and inalienable. The languages vary in which nouns can do this and to “what degree the possessed noun may appear with the morphosyntax of either class” (Ross 2004, 511). The different grammatical marking may reflect different types of relationships, where a more socially distant relationship is expressed indirectly.

(7.35a) Direct Possession – Inalienable

nesu-ng
 grandmother-1POSS
 ‘my grandmother’

(7.35b) Indirect Possession – Alienable

nesum *a* *këne*
 grandmother H.GEN 1SG
 ‘my grandmother’

(7.35c) Indirect Possession

*nesum*³⁵ *a* *niye*
grandmother H.GEN 3SG
'his/her grandmother'

Direct possession through affixation appears to be falling out of use, as it is much less commonly attested throughout the current data compared to either a pronominal possessor or *a*-possession. The range of strategies used to mark direct possession is illustrated through the term *kala* 'brother, friend'. Example (7.36) shows the bare noun form *kala* used in a sentence, but not in a possessive construction.

(7.36) *Nakha* *re-wi* *kala* *kho*.
 3PL 3PL-COP brother PL
 'They were brothers.' [vnm16-ninde.wav 3.329 11.876]

Ninde illustrates Ross' (2004) assertion that some nouns can fall into both categories of alienability and inalienability through the term *kala*. This is grammatically encoded in the two possessive strategies shown in example (7.37a) (direct) and (7.37b) (indirect). Example (7.37a) encodes the inalienable relationship through the direct possession suffix *-ne* as well as the lack of a possessive marker between the noun and independent pronoun acting as the possessor. In contrast, example (7.37b) encodes the alienability of the relationship through the presence of the possessive marker *nga*.

(7.37a) *kala-ne* *niye*
 friend-3SG 3SG
 'his (close) friend, brother'

³⁵ Unlike other forms, where the third person possessive suffix *-ne* appears to be fusing with the bare form, (7.35c) shows that the second person possessive suffix *-m* appears to be fusing with the bare form.

(7.37b)	<i>kala</i>	<i>nga</i>	<i>niye</i>
	friend	H.GEN	3SG
	‘his friend’ [vnm17-ninde.wav 25.646 33.844]		

The term *kala* can refer to either a ‘close friend’ or a ‘brother’ when directly possessed with the direct possession suffix, showing an inalienable relationship. However, the indirectly possessed *kala*, as shown in example (7.37b), is only attested in the current corpus as ‘friend’, presumably showing a more alienable relationship.

Example (7.37a) suggests that the third person singular suffix *-ne* is fusing with the bare form of the noun. Evidence of fusion can be seen in example (7.38) where the term *kalane* is used as the possessor of *nus* ‘banana’, after the personal possessive marker.

(7.38)	<i>nus</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>kalane</i>	<i>kho</i>
	banana	H.GEN	brother	PL
	‘the brothers’ bananas’			

However, a counter argument can be made that if the *-ne* suffix was fusing with the bare form of *kala* ‘friend’ to form *kalane*, then we should expect to see an indirect possessive phrase like **kalane a këne* ‘my friend’, but this pattern is unattested. In example (7.39), the direct possession suffix is used in the first person, but the term is further followed by the typical indirect possession pattern to express the less semantically close relationship of ‘classmates’.

(7.39)	<i>kala-ng</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>këne</i>	<i>kho</i>	<i>lele</i>	<i>klasrum</i>
	friend-1SG	H.GEN	1SG	PL	LOC	classroom
	‘classmates’ [Year1Readers5.Ref007]					

While it was stated that a term can fall into either category of direct or indirect possession (shown in examples 7.37a and 7.37b above), example (7.39) demonstrates simultaneous direct coding (with *-ng*) and indirect coding (with *a*). The Ninde possession system appears to be undergoing change, with multiple possibilities for expressing the possession of some entities.

7.4.2 Part-Whole Constructions

‘Part-whole’ relationships are encoded so that the ‘part’ and ‘whole’ are contiguous. Like other direct (inalienable) possession constructions, they follow the structure possessum + possessor. Example (7.40) illustrates this with the third person plural independent pronoun standing in for the common noun *nalpepe* ‘butterflies’.³⁶

- (7.40) *nelwakha* *nakha*
 wing 3PL
 ‘their wings (of butterflies)’ [Year3Readers9.Ref003]

The encoding of inalienable relationships is not exclusive to inanimate nonhuman body parts, but any ‘part’ that is not easily separated from the ‘whole’, such as plants and other elements of nature.

Example (7.41) illustrates this point with the term for ‘waves’. Here, *nepme* ‘wave’ cannot be separated from the whole, *netes* ‘ocean’, and *netes* immediately follows *nepme*.

- (7.41) *nepme* *netes*
 wave ocean
 ‘wave of the ocean’ [conch.shell.Ref002]

³⁶ Alternative analysis is to propose that examples 7.41-7.43 are endocentric compounds.

A similar pattern is shown when referring to the houses (7.42) and people (7.43) of a particular village. The houses cannot be separated from their village; and while people are able to leave the village, they cannot separate themselves from their home village.

(7.42) *nami Siviri kho*
house S. PL
‘houses of Siviri’ [Year3Readers6.Ref014]

(7.43) *nugut Siviri kho*
person S. PL
‘people of Siviri’ [Year3Readers6.Ref009]

While both common and personal nouns are attested in inalienable possessive relationships, only common nouns can be found in part-whole genitive constructions.

This pattern is well-attested with parts of a tree. The following example shows all parts of the tree attested in the data, all of which display contiguous part + whole sequences.

(7.44)	<i>nitiwe nei</i>	‘flower of tree’
	<i>nuwokho nei, nukhoi nei</i>	‘leaf of tree’
	<i>nuwule nei</i>	‘seed of tree’
	<i>nansakha nei, naosakha nei</i>	‘branch of tree’

7.4.3 Indirect (Alienable) Possession

Indirect possession is signalled by one of three possessive allomorphs: *a*, *ya* or *nga*, glossed ‘H.GEN’ for ‘human genitive’. A full account of the distribution of allomorphs remains to be established. The pattern of usage follows the following formula: possessum + *a* + possessor_(human).

The indirect possessive construction in Ninde is related to an alienable relationship between the possessor and possessum. Nouns from each of the three classes – common, personal and local – are attested as the possessum in indirect possession constructions. Example (7.49) shows the common noun *nabawul* followed by the possessive phrase *a niye* ‘of him, his’.

- (7.45) *nabawul* *a* *niye*
 shirt H.GEN 3SG
 ‘his shirt’ Lt. ‘shirt of his’ [Story8.Ref004]

Example (7.46) shows the personal noun and kin term *tatai* ‘dad’ followed by the possessive marker *a* and second person singular independent pronoun *nug*. (More in Chapter 8.1.2).

- (7.46) *tatai* *a* *nug*
 dad H.GEN 2SG
 ‘your dad’ Lt. ‘dad of yours’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 106.205 116.884]

Finally, example (7.47) shows the local noun *thami* followed by the possessive marker *ya* and possessor *nesum* ‘grandmother’. This is the only example in the corpus of a possessed local noun. (Local nouns are discussed further in §8.2).

- (7.47) *thami* *ya* *nesum*
 inside.house H.GEN grandmother
 ‘inside the house of her grandmother’ [Year3Readers5.Ref013]

While body parts are generally considered inalienable, and therefore are directly possessed, some body parts may be indirectly possessed. These body parts are usually ones with a stronger potential for alienability. Example (7.48) shows a loose tooth being indirectly possessed by the subject.

- (7.48) *Nubkhoi a këne ka Ø-ningi niye.*
tooth H.GEN 1SG ANA 3SG-shake 3SG
‘My tooth is loose.’ [Story7.Ref003]

Independent pronouns are the most commonly attested possessors throughout the data, but any personal noun can be used as a possessor as well. Example (7.49) shows an identical construction to example (7.48), but with the proper noun *Leina* as the possessor.

- (7.49) *Nubkhoi a Leina ka Ø-ningi niye.*
tooth H.GEN Leina ANA 3SG-shake 3SG
‘Leina’s tooth is loose.’ [Story7.Ref002]

Many kin terms can fall into either of the two main Ninde noun classes: common nouns and personal nouns. The use of possessive strategies appears to be one of the signals as to which class the kin term belongs. While both personal and common nouns reflect alienable and inalienable possession, they are encoded in different ways. Only personal nouns can be found as possessors in indirect (alienable) possession relationships with the possessive markers *a*, *ya* or *nga* before them. Common nouns exhibit an associative relationship through the genitive *nene* (see §7.4.4 for further discussion). As previously discussed in §7.1, Proto-Oceanic common nouns were marked with either **a* or **na*. Many Oceanic languages contain a personaliser, which takes the shape (or variation of) *i* (Lynch, Ross, Crowley 2002, 71). While Ninde personal nouns do not take a similar personaliser in all occurrences, there may potentially be a historic link between the form of the Oceanic personaliser and Ninde possessive marker for human possessors.

Examples (7.50) and (7.51) show the kin terms *kalane* ‘brother’ and *lepowokh* ‘girl’ acting as personal nouns. They are marked in this way through the possessive markers *a* and *nga*.

(7.50) *nus a kalane kho*
 banana H.GEN brother PL
 ‘the brothers’ bananas’ [vnm16-ninde.wav 0 3.329]

(7.51) *nu-ruwokh-yene nga lepowokh*
 NOM1-think-NOM2 H.GEN girl
 ‘granddaughter’s thoughts’ [Year3Readers5.Ref024]

7.4.4 Possessive Association

The term ‘possessive association’ refers to conceptual co-occurrence (Taylor & MacLaury 1995, 58). It does not only refer to ownership, but can show part-whole relationship or the relationship of an attribute to the head noun. In Ninde, the genitive preposition *nene* is typically used to signify a possessive-type association between two nonhuman entities, which differs from other strategies utilised to show possession. Genitive positions – both the possessum and possessor of the construction – are typically filled by common nouns. In Ninde, the combination of possessum + *nene* + possessor is found in the data.

Example (7.52) shows the phrase *nele* ‘feather’ *nene titu* ‘of the chicken’.

(7.52) *nele nene titu*
 feather NHUM.GEN chicken
 ‘feather of the chicken’ [vnm06-ninde.wav 0 2.88]

Example (7.53) shows a similar pattern with an inanimate ‘whole’ object. The common noun *newetou* ‘colour’ is shown to be an attribute of *nuwukho neitëktëk* ‘k.o. leaf’, which itself is a part-whole construction.

(7.53) *newetou nene nuwokho neitëktëk*
 colour NHUM.GEN leaf k.o.tree
 ‘colour of the neitiktik leaf’ [Year2Readers3.Ref002]

Genitives are also attested in instances where the purpose of a place or building is described. Both the possessed and possessor positions are filled by a common noun, as shown in example (7.54) with the common noun *nute* ‘place’ as possessed and the nominalised verb *nëmiayene* ‘health’ as ‘possessor’ or attribute of the whole.

(7.54) *nute nene nëmiayene*
 place NHUM.GEN health
 ‘hospital’ Lt. ‘place of health’ [vnm21-ninde.wav 20.22 44.879]

Further, *nene* can also be utilised to specify a specific type or kind of something. For example, the gender or growth stage of an insect can be expressed with this grammatical strategy. Example (7.55a) expresses the meaning ‘baby caterpillars’ through the use of a genitive construction.

(7.55a) *paipi nene nanpopou kho*
 baby NHUM.GEN caterpillar PL
 ‘baby caterpillars’ [Year2Readers8.Ref008]

Similarly, example (7.55b) shows the gender of butterflies, encoded through another genitive relationship.

(7.55b) *kaiwut nene nalpepe kho*
 man NHUM.GEN butterfly PL
 ‘male butterflies’ [Year2Readers8.Ref022]

The possessor in associative possession constructions can go unnamed if it is easily understood by the possessum. When this occurs, these constructions are often modified by a quantifier.

Example (7.56) shows *nawa* ‘fruit’ as the head noun. Its possessor *nei* ‘tree’ is not explicitly named. The indefinite quantifier *tuwa* follows.

(7.56) [*nawa nene*] *tuwa*
 fruit NHUM.GEN INDF
 ‘a piece of its fruit’ Lt. ‘fruit of it, a’ [Year2Readers3.Ref012]

A similar pattern is shown in example (7.57) with the common noun *nute* ‘place’ and quantifier *yakha* ‘all’.

(7.57) [*nute nene*] *yakha*
 place NHUM.GEN all
 ‘everywhere’ Lt. ‘the places of (them), all’ [Year2Readers6.Ref009]

As stated above, possessive association is typically attested between two nonhuman entities. While example (7.51) – reduplicated here as (7.58) – shows the noun *lepowokh* ‘girl’ as the possessor, marked by the possessor *nga*, examples (7.59a) and (7.59b) show the same noun as possessor, but following the genitive *nene*. This is due to the relationship between the possessum and possessed. The possessive construction in (7.58) shows a relationship between a human and an abstract human possession ‘thoughts’. The use of the human genitive rather than the direct possession pattern may indicate that Mewan people view consciousness as somehow alienable from the physical body. Examples (7.59a) and (7.59b) are

physical objects that have an association with the girl. They too are alienable, but not directly or naturally related to the girl herself.

- (7.58) *nu-ruwokh-yene* *nga* *lepowokh*
 NOM1-think-NOM2 H.GEN girl
 ‘granddaughter’s thoughts’ [Year3Readers5.Ref024]

- (7.59a) *nele* *nene* *lepowokh*
 feather NHUM.GEN girl
 ‘girl’s feather’ [Year3Readers5.Ref014]

- (7.59b) *thokho* *nene* *lepowokh*
 grave NHUM.GEN girl
 ‘girl’s grave’ [Year3Readers5.Ref034]

7.5 Number Marking

Number marking of the head noun is not obligatory in Ninde. However, when utilised, number is the last constituent of the noun phrase. There are three strategies of postnominal number modification attested inside the noun phrase:

- a general plural marker (§7.5.1),
- a numeral modifier (§7.5.2) or
- a quantifier (§7.5.3)

Any of these strategies can be utilised to signal a nonsingular nominal head.

7.5.1 General Plural Marker

Common nouns can take the plural marker *kho* as a post modifier to signify the nonsingular. The plural marker *kho* is attested with both inanimate and animate

nouns, whether human or nonhuman, as the subject or object, as well as the prepositional object. When utilised, the plural marker is usually the final component of the noun phrase.

(7.60a) *nalpepe kho*
 butterfly PL
 ‘butterflies’ [Year2Readers4.Ref001]

(7.60b) *numgut Mataso kho re-khupgous kha netes*
 person M. PL 3PL-cross on ocean
 ‘The people of Mataso crossed the ocean.’ Year3Readers6.Ref002

(7.60c) *Nimiyathe kho re-ti....*
 fish PL 3PL-say
 ‘The fish say....’ [Story19.Ref005]

Examples (7.61a) and (7.61b) show plural nouns acting as the object argument of a transitive verb.

(7.61a) *Re-yel nawa nei kho.*
 3PL-carry fruit tree PL
 ‘They fruited.’ Lt. ‘They carried the tree’s fruits.’ [vnm16-ninde.wav 24.739 33.53]

(7.61b) *Re-golou naqanyene nga nakha kho.*
 3PL-gather food H.GEN 3PL PL
 ‘They gathered their foods.’ [Year2Readers5.Ref003]

Examples (7.62a) and (7.62b) show plural nouns acting as the prepositional object of their given constructions.

(7.62a) *lou nitiwe nei kho maq nei kho*
 over flower tree PL and tree PL
 ‘over the flowers and trees’ [Year2Readers4.Ref019]

(7.62b) *ma nalpepe kho*
 with butterfly PL
 ‘with butterflies’ [vnm17-ninde.wav 11.245 18.208]

The examples above show the general plural marker *kho* following countable nouns (i.e. *nalpepe kho* ‘butterflies’). Nouns that are collective – or mass nouns in English – are also attested with the plural marker, encoding the meaning ‘all of the X’. This is illustrated in examples (7.63a) and (7.63b) with ‘dirt’ and ‘soil’.

(7.63a) *neyakhte kho*
 dirt PL
 ‘all the dirt.’ Year3Reader8.Ref004

(7.63b) *netene kho*
 soil PL
 ‘all the soil’ [Ninde_last weekend.wav 0 2.656]

7.5.2 Numeral Modifier

Similarly to the general plural marker, cardinal numbers can signify number for both animate – whether human or nonhuman – or inanimate common nouns. Numerals can only modify common nouns. Numerals are not verbal in Ninde, and never carry obligatory subject indexes in Ninde, unlike languages such as Neverver (Barbour 2013, 157).

Example (7.64) shows the list of attested cardinal numbers³⁷:

(7.64)	<i>sei</i>	‘one’
	<i>khuwo</i>	‘two’
	<i>tël</i>	‘three’
	<i>wes</i>	‘four’
	<i>selme</i>	‘five’
	<i>dumane sei</i>	‘six’
	<i>dumane khuwo</i>	‘seven’
	<i>dumane tël</i>	‘eight’
	<i>dumane wes</i>	‘nine’
	<i>langal, thangal</i>	‘ten’
	<i>nathangal sei</i>	‘100’
	<i>nathangal khuwo</i>	‘200’
	<i>nathangal tël</i>	‘300’
	<i>nathangal wes</i>	‘400’
	<i>nathangal thangal</i>	‘1,000’

As shown in the numeral list above, numbers 6-9 are formed by compounding the the number *dumane* ‘five’ with the remaining number needed to achieve the final numeral. For example, the number *dumane sei* ‘six’ is achieved by compounding *dumane* ‘five’ with *sei* ‘one’.

Examples (7.65a), (7.65b) and (7.65c) show three different common nouns modified by different numerals.

(7.65a)	<i>tkhaine</i>	<i>khuwo</i>
	day	two
	‘two days’ Year3Readers1.Ref.043	

³⁷ The numbers 11-20 are unattested in the current data set.

(7.65b) *netnowokh* *tël*
 child three
 ‘three kittens’ Lt. ‘three children’ [vnm02-ninde.wav 5.383 15.302]

(7.65c) *titu* *selme*
 chicken five
 ‘five chickens’ Story9.Ref002

7.5.3 *Quantifiers*

Quantifiers are a small, closed set of postnominal modifiers. While there are other lexemes that express quantity (i.e. *thapo* ‘be many’), such items belong to the subclass of stative verbs which can be used within a relative clause. The class of quantifiers consists solely of the forms which also serve as indefinite pronouns. Members of this subclass can modify animate or inanimate common nouns, whether human or nonhuman.

The subclass of quantifiers is comprised of the following items:

(7.66) *yakha* ‘all’
 tuwa ‘INDF’
 *tuwa kho*³⁸ ‘some’

³⁸ It is believed that *tuwa kho* ‘some’ may be a member of this class. However, there is no evidence in the corpus of it modifying pronouns or acting as an independent pronoun (as there is evidence of the plural marker separated from *tuwa* by other modifiers) like the other members of this subclass. In general, *tuwa kho* is attested much less than the other members of this subclass. A larger collection of natural speech will help clarify the functions and behaviour of *tuwa kho*.

Quantifiers can modify the nominal head of a noun phrase.

- (7.67a) *numgut yakha*
person all
‘everyone’ [Year3Readers8.Ref023]

- (7.67b) *nei tuwa*
tree INDF
‘a tree’ [vnm04-ninde.wav 2.919 8.278]

- (7.67c) *nanabuwo tuwa kho*
bamboo some
‘some bamboo’ [Story18.Ref004]

The form *yakha* follows plural pronominal heads as shown in the examples below.

- (7.68a) *nakha yakha*
3PL all
‘everyone’ [Year2Readers8.Ref017]

- (7.68b) *kamem yakha*
1PL.EXCL all
‘we all’ [Story7.Ref010]

It is possible for more than one number marking strategy to be used within the same noun phrase. Example (7.69) shows a noun phrase where the head is modified by both the quantifier *yakha* and plural marker *kho*.

- (7.69) *numgut yakha kho*
 person all PL
 ‘all the others’ Lt. ‘all people’ [Year3Readers3.Ref005]

7.6 Anaphoric *ka*

Ninde has an anaphoric reference marker *ka*. It is the final element of the noun phrase. This marker can show specificity and is found particularly in storytelling. Example (7.70) shows an excerpt from a story where a specific *něbētep maile* ‘pawpaw’ is pictured on the page and described in the text. The anaphoric reference is made to the picture.

- (7.70) *Něbētep maile ge ka Ø-lět.*
 pawpaw PROX ANA 3SG-be.yellow
 ‘The pawpaw is yellow.’ [Story4.Ref002]

This morpheme also is shown in the interrogative in example (7.71). The anaphoric *ka* is used with the interrogative *de* and proximate demonstrative *ge* to encode the question ‘What is it/this here?’ The question is answered with the common noun *bokhmen* ‘dog’ modified only by the proximate demonstrative, as it is already understood to *which* dog it is in reference.

- (7.71) *Ka de ge? Bokhmen ge.*
 ANA what PROX dog PROX
 ‘What is it/this here? It/Here is a dog.’ [Story5.Ref002]

The anaphoric *ka* can also reference personal pronouns. Examples (7.72a) and (7.72b) are also taken from a story. Where the anaphoric *ka* refers to the personal noun *mamam* ‘mum’. It is rare to see kin terms without a possessive phrase

following it, and in the example *ka* gives reference to the specific mother pictured in the story, without necessarily knowing *whose* mother she is.

(7.72a) *Mamam ka Ø-tokh mene?*

mum ANA 3SG-stay where

‘Where is (the) mum?’ [Story8.Ref017]

(7.72b) *Mamam ka Ø-sēm nēbb.*

mum ANA 3SG-cut firewood

‘(The) mum is cutting firewood.’ [Story8.Ref018]

Unlike many other modifiers, *ka* can be used after an independent pronoun. Example (7.73) shows *ka* after the first person plural inclusive independent pronoun *kēte*. Here, *ka* is used to emphasise inclusion, where ‘we’ includes the mum herself along with the girl and aunty mentioned previously in the story.

(7.73) *Mamam Ø-ti ‘Kēte ka te-sēske*

mum 3SG-say 1PL.INCL ANA 1PL.INCL-NEG

lipton.’

Lipton

‘Mum said, ‘We have no tea!’ [Story17.Ref007]

Ka is also able to be used independently after the locative *le(le)*. This process is described in §7.7.

7.7 Common Nouns after *le(le)*

Common nouns are attested after the general locative *le(le)* in order to encode local function. Local nouns are distinct from common nouns with local function, because they do not require additional morphology to encode local function. Local nouns are described in §8.2, while the locative *lele* is discussed in §4.2.1.

Locative phrases are attested in both transitive and intransitive constructions.

Examples (7.74a) and (7.74b) illustrate common nouns in locative phrases in intransitive constructions.

- (7.74a) *Këne na-tokh le netes.*
 1SG 1SG-stay LOC ocean
 ‘I live in the ocean.’ [Story19.Ref004]

- (7.74b) *Paepi nene nanpopou kho re-tusetokh*
 baby NHUM.GEN caterpillar PL 3PL-emerge

lele namathap ne nakha.
 LOC egg NHUM.GEN 3PL
 ‘The baby caterpillars emerged from their egg.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref008]

Examples (7.75a) and (7.75b) illustrate common nouns in locative phrases in transitive constructions.

- (7.75a) *Nug=kholagre ku-p-li nanmësi le nemelege.*
 2SG=can 2SG-FUT-see star LOC sky
 ‘You can see a star in the sky.’ [Story21.Ref006]

(7.75b) *Niye Ø-yelel pepe lele newëkha niye.*
 3SG 3SG-carry book LOC hand 3SG
 ‘She is carrying a book in her hand.’ [Story22.Ref005]

The strategy of encoding location through *le(le)* + common noun is not limited to after the verb. Example (7.76) shows this locative phrase used in the initial adjunct position.

(7.76) *Le nami nubulwulyes, kamakh ka Ø-wul....*
 LOC store 1DU.EXCL ANA 1DU.EXCL-buy
 ‘At the store, we (two) buy...’ [Story17.Ref006]

There is evidence that the noun is not obligatory after the locative in transitive constructions where the destination is understood in the context.

Examples (7.77a) and (7.77b) show the locative *lele* with no prepositional object, which is understood through the larger context of the discourse as ‘laplap’.

(7.77a) *Re-p-bus nēmet a nakha lele Ø.*
 3PL-FUT-squeeze coconut H.GEN 3PL LOC [laplap]
 ‘They squeeze their coconut into it (laplap).’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 160.712 165.097]

(7.77b) *Re-p-subrou sepme netes lele Ø.*
 3PL-FUT-toss LIM ocean LOC [laplap]
 ‘They will toss sea water only in it (laplap).’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 169.771 173.144]

Typically found as a nominal modifier, the anaphoric *ka* is able to solely follow the locative *lele*. Example (7.78) shows *ka* encoding resumptive qualities in that it refers back to the subject of the clause, *nēbia* ‘fire’.

(7.78) *Wut nēbia nga nug=mes tele nug=tu niyo*
 SUB fire H.GEN 2SG=be.dead SUB 2SG=put laplap

a nug lele ka...
 H.GEN 2SG LOC ANA

‘If your fire has burned down enough to put your laplap onto it...’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 247.838 254.567]

Example (7.79) shows the anaphoric *ka* following the locative *lele*. The meaning of *ka* is understood through the larger context of the whole discourse. The speaker was in the process of describing how to prepare *laplap*, the noun to which the anaphoric *ka* refers.

(7.79) *Tuwa man re-s-nawakh re-p-bus*
 INDF SUB 3PL-NEG1-want 3SG-FUT-squeeze

nēmēt lele ka...
 coconut LOC ANA

‘The ones who don’t want to squeeze coconut in it (laplap)...’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 165.097 169.771]

7.8 Interrogative *de*

Example (7.80) shows the interrogative *de* ‘what’ used to enquire about an entity. The question is answered with the common noun *nemen* ‘bird’.

(7.80) *Ka de ge? Nemen ge.*
 DISC.INT what PROX bird PROX

‘What is it? It’s a bird.’ [Story5.Ref003]

Example (7.81) shows the interrogative *de* ‘what’ inquire about an entity that is *weisasakha* ‘hard’. The answer is found in the common noun *niblaga nabaq* ‘turtle’s shell’.

- (7.81) *Ka de Ø-weisasakha? Niblaga nabaq ka*
 DISC.INT what 3SG-be.hard shell turtle ANA

Ø-weisasakha

3SG-be.hard

‘What is hard? The turtle’s shell is hard.’ [Story6.Ref001 & 002]

In the previous example, the interrogative *de* is found in the subject position. Alternatively, example (7.82a) shows *de* in the object position, which is then replaced by the answer to the enquiry, *pepe* ‘book’, in example (7.82b).

- (7.82a) *Magret Ø-yelyel de lele newakha niye?*
 Margaret 3SG-carry what LOC hand 3SG
 ‘What is Margaret carrying in her hands?’ [Story22.Ref004]

- (7.82b) *Niye Ø-yelyel pepe lele newakha niye.*
 3SG 3SG-carry book LOC hand 3SG
 ‘She is carrying a book in her hands.’ [Story22.Ref005]

Example (7.83a) shows *de* enquiring about a common noun serving as the prepositional object or *kha de* ‘with what’. Example (7.83b) reveals the answer *nëbuluyete* ‘thatch grater’.

- (7.83a) *Takh-p-khokhai nge kha de ya?*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate 3SG.O.INAN INST what DISC
 ‘We will grate it with what?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 97.819 99.465]

- (7.83b) *Takh-p-khokhai* *nge* *kha* *nëbulyete*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate 3SG.O.INAN INST thatch.grater
 ‘We grate it with the thatch grater.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 101.263 103.103]

Further discussion of *de* and other interrogatives can be found in §4.5.

7.9 Morphological Processes

7.9.1 Nominalisation

Ninde has a very productive nominalisation structure. The nominalisation of verbs typically occurs through the addition of both a nominalising prefix and suffix. There are a few instances where only the initial prefix is present (see examples 7.85m-o below). The nominalisation process in Ninde typically utilises the following strategy: *n(V)-* VERB *-yene*.

The nominalising prefix *n(V)-* is identical to the marking of most Ninde common nouns.

Below, example (7.84) shows a prototypical example of Ninde nominalisation with *no-* fulfilling the prefix slot. With this and the *-yene* suffix attached to the verb *ruwokh* ‘think’, the novel meaning ‘thought’ is produced.

- (7.84) *no-ruwokh-yene*
 NOM1-think-NOM2
 ‘thought’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 494.307 502.118]

Examples (7.85a-l) show further prototypical examples of nominalisation of Ninde verbs. This nominalisation occurs with both transitive and intransitive verbs. Example (7.85f) shows the stative verb *da* ‘good’ nominalised as ‘love/loving’. Examples (7.85m-o) show verbs that have only taken the prefix

n(V)-, but not the *-yene* suffix. Example (7.85p) shows the nominalisation of the stative verb *nesene pele* ‘angry’. This example differs from the others, because the verb, begins with a *n(V)-* sequence. It only takes the nominalising suffix *-yene* to derive a noun. Finally, example (7.85q) shows the verb *kha* ‘work’ take the prototypical nominal prefix *na-*, but a variant suffix *-ine* to complete its nominal counterpart *nakhaine*. This is most likely an alternative of the prototypical process found in examples (7.85a-l). For example, while *naqanyene* ‘food’ is widely attested, so is the alternative form *naqaine*.

(7.85)	Verb	Gloss	Noun	Gloss
(a)	<i>ruwokh</i>	‘think’	<i>noruwokhyene</i>	‘thought’
(b)	<i>bulwul</i>	‘sell’	<i>nubulwulyene</i>	‘selling/sale’
(c)	<i>khuk</i>	‘catch (fish)’	<i>nekhukyene</i>	‘fishing rod’
(d)	<i>witumo</i>	‘laugh’	<i>niwitumoyene</i>	‘laughter’
(e)	<i>yawo</i>	‘dance (n)’	<i>neyawoyene</i>	‘dance (n)’
(f)	<i>da</i>	‘good’	<i>nedayene</i>	‘love/loving’
(g)	<i>sogokho</i>	‘play’	<i>nesogokhoyene</i>	‘game’
(h)	<i>sumkho</i>	‘cook’	<i>nesumkhoyene</i>	‘cooking’
(i)	<i>wawakha</i>	‘shout’	<i>newawakhayene</i>	‘warning’
(j)	<i>qan</i>	‘eat’	<i>naqanyene</i>	‘food’
(k)	<i>mitokh</i>	‘sleep (v)’	<i>nimitokhyene</i>	‘sleep (n)’
(l)	<i>tiwokh</i>	‘read’	<i>nitiwokhyene</i>	‘story’
(m)	<i>kha</i>	‘cost (v)’	<i>nakha</i>	‘price’
(n)	<i>wane</i>	‘fruit (v)’	<i>nawane</i>	‘fruit (n)’
(o)	<i>mathaq</i>	‘be cold (v)’	<i>nemathaq</i>	‘cold (n)’
(p)	<i>nesene pele</i>	‘be angry’	<i>nesene peleyene</i>	‘anger’
(q)	<i>kha</i>	‘work (v)’	<i>nakhaine</i>	‘work (n)’

Example (7.86) shows both the original verb and its nominalised form within the same sentence. This example shows the verb *kha* ‘cost’ with its nominalised counterpart *nakha* ‘cost, price’.

- (7.86) *Wiye* *Ø-kha* *na-kha?*
 how.many 3SG-cost NOM1-cost
 ‘How much does it cost? [Year2Readers9.Ref021]

In example (7.87), the verb *tiwokh* ‘read’ also takes its nominalised counterpart *nitiwokhyene* ‘story’ as one of its core arguments.

- (7.87) *Bubum* *Kalua* *Ø-tiwokh* *ni-tiwokh-yene*.
 grandfather K. 3SG-read NOM1-read-NOM2
 ‘Grandfather Kalua read the story.’ [Year2Readers1.Ref024]

Terminology borrowed from Bislama and/or other widely spoken languages on the island can be nominalised. The term *smok* comes from the verb ‘smoke’. While the same form is used for both the noun and the verb in both Bislama and English, the nominal form in Ninde undergoes affixation.

- (7.88) *ne-smok-yene*
 NOM1-smoke-NOM2
 ‘smoke (of tobacco, cigarette)’ [Year3Readers4.Ref005]

Nominalising affixation can also be used to signal compounding. Example (7.89) shows the nominalising suffix *-yene* affixed to the verb *pakhap* ‘tall’. The term *nute* ‘place’ already begins with the *n(V)-* sequence, and therefore, does not require the nominalising prefix. The addition of the nominalising morpheme signals that rather than just depicting a ‘high place’, the novel meaning ‘cliff’ is produced. Further discussion of compounding can be found in §7.9.2.

- (7.89) *nute* *pakhap-yene*
 place tall/high-NOM2
 ‘cliff’ [Year3Reader.Ref006]

One example that appears not to follow the prototypical nominalising process is *tlepe*. The stative verb *lepe* ‘big’ retains the relativising morpheme *t-* in its nominalised form. More discussion regarding the fusion of *t-* with *lepe* was presented in §7.2.1.

- (7.90) *ne-tlepe-yene*
 NOM1-big-NOM2
 ‘shape’

7.9.2 *Compounding*

A compound consists of two or more ‘base’ lexemes that, when compounded, encode a novel semantic value (Haspelmath 2002, 85; Crowley, Siegel & Piau 1995, 245). There is some evidence of compounding in the corpus where a noun and various other parts of speech can create a compound noun with novel meaning.

7.9.2.1 *Noun + Noun*

One compounding strategy utilised to produce novel lexemes is the combination of two nouns, and follows the simple equation $N1 + N2$. For example, (7.91a) shows the term *newëkha* ‘hand’ followed by *maile* ‘white man, foreigner’ compounding to create the novel meaning ‘spoon’. These compounds are exocentric, in that the meaning of the compound does not derive from one of the compounded elements.

(7.91)	Noun 1	Gloss	+	Noun 2	Gloss	=	Gloss
(a)	<i>newëkha</i>	‘hand’	+	<i>maile</i>	‘white man’	=	‘spoon’
(b)	<i>nëbëtep</i>	‘breadfruit’	+	<i>maile</i>	‘white man’	=	‘pawpaw’
(c)	<i>namathap</i>	‘egg’	+	<i>nesës</i>	‘ant’	=	‘rice’

7.9.2.2 Noun + Verb

Another compounding strategy is to combine a noun and an uninflected verb root to create a novel meaning. These examples differ from simple phrases in that they create a novel meaning that is unique to the N + V combination. One example was given in (7.89) with the compound of *nute* ‘place’ and *pakhap* ‘tall/high’ as *nute-pakhap-yene* ‘cliff’.

Example (7.92) shows the combination of the noun *nowoi* ‘water, river’ with the verb *takhke* ‘collect water’ to create a compound with the novel meaning ‘spring’.

- (7.92) *nowoi-takhke*
 river-collect.water
 ‘spring (river + collect.water)’ [vnm03-ninde.wav 19.783 54.73]

Example (7.93) shows the common noun *nowoi* again with the verb *da* ‘good’. This compound creates the novel meaning ‘medicine’.

- (7.93) *nowoi-da*
 water-be.good
 ‘medicine (water + be.good)’ [vnm21-ninde.wav 20.22 44.879]

8 Personal and Local Nouns

Personal and local nouns display distinct traits that distinguish them both from each other as well as from common nouns. These distinct traits are displayed in §8.1 for personal nouns, followed by a description of each trait in §8.1.1-§8.1.4. An account of nouns that can fit into more than one subclass is given in §8.1.5. §8.2 illustrates the features unique to local nouns. A description of the two subclasses, directional nouns (§8.2.1) and temporal nouns (§8.2.2), concludes the chapter.

8.1 Personal Nouns

Siewierska describes the category of person semantically as “how we name and rename individuals” (2004, 1). The concept of naming persons in Ninde is reflected in personal nouns, while the renaming is reflected in the pronominal system. The class of personal nouns is similar to many other Malekula (and wider Oceanic) languages in that it refers to specific people in the form of proper names of individual people, kin terms and titles. While many other Oceanic languages signal all personal nouns with a personal article, represented by *a* (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002), Ninde does not. It does have a human possessor marker *a*, however, which is likely derived from the Oceanic personal marker. Following is a list of properties shared by personal nouns. As nouns, personal nouns can function as the subject, object or oblique. They can also be found as the possessed item, before the possession marker *a*. Personal nouns are distinguished from other nouns in that they display the following traits:

- Personal nouns, like pronouns, can fill the possessor position after the possessive marker *a* (§8.1.2);
- Personal nouns do not demonstrate the syntactic characteristics of common nouns; they cannot be modified by a relative clause, demonstrative determiner or number marker;
- Personal nouns select the interrogative form *nane* ‘who’ (§8.1.3).

Examples (8.1a), (8.1b) and (8.1c) show examples of personal nouns from the categories of personal names and kin terms. Both categories can be used as vocatives, to address individuals, and as referential forms to refer to individuals.

(8.1a) Personal Names

Setoko

Pita

Malua

Susi

Salome

Sawan

(8.1b)	Kin Terms	Gloss
	<i>mamam</i>	‘mother’
	<i>tatai</i>	‘father’
	<i>duwai</i>	‘uncle’
	<i>sapoi</i>	‘paternal aunt’
	<i>bubum</i>	‘grandfather’
	<i>nesum</i>	‘grandmother’
	<i>kala(ne)</i>	‘brother, friend’

The only title that appears in the corpus is the Bislama borrowing *jif* ‘chief’. It is used as a title on its own, and in noun phrases such as *jif kuk a skul* ‘school chef’.

Anthropomorphised animals are also found in this noun class. Their form is identical to their common noun form, but they can be used as vocatives, and as referential personal names for characters in stories.

Personal nouns cannot take many of the syntactic modifiers that common nouns are able to take. Within the corpus, personal nouns are never attested with demonstratives or any type of number marking (quantifiers, ordinal numbers, etc.)

8.1.1 Personal Noun Functions

Example (8.2) shows the personal noun *Ari* as the subject argument of a transitive construction. The personal noun *Momoa* serves as the object argument of the same construction.

- (8.2) *Ari* *Ø-wakha* *Momoa*.
A. 3SG-rub M.
‘Ari rubbed Momoa.’ [Year1Readers9.Ref009]

Example (8.3) shows the personal noun phrase *tatai a këne* ‘my father’ used in a prepositional phrase.

- (8.3) *duwan* *tatai* *a* *këne*.
COM dad H.GEN 1SG
‘with my dad.’ [Year1Readers5.Ref003]

8.1.2 Possessive Markers *a*, *nga* and *ya*

In Ninde, the personal possessive marker *a* (and its alternative forms *nga* and *ya*) is used before a personal noun or pronoun in order to show possession. While only personal nouns and pronouns can be introduced by a possessive marker, some common nouns such as animals are able to be anthropomorphised, especially in stories, and are found with the personal marker *a* as well (see §7.4.3). These phrases can be found modifying common nouns that act as subjects or objects of a verb.

In example (8.4), the common noun *nubulwes* ‘vehicle’ is followed by the possessive phrase *a Setoko*, containing a personal name.

- (8.4) *nubulwes* *a* *Setoko*
vehicle H.GEN S.
‘Setoko's Truck’ [ynm14-ninde.wav 0 2.344]

In example (8.5), the common noun *nowogonei* ‘canoe’ is followed by the same personal possessive marker *a* and then the kin term *tatai* ‘father’.

- (8.5) *nowogonei* *a* *tatai*
 canoe H.GEN father
 ‘papa’s canoe’ [Year1.Reader6.Ref007]

Example (8.6) shows the possessive *nga duwai Ken*, which contains both the kin term *duwai* ‘uncle’ and proper name ‘Ken’.

- (8.6) *nami* *t-Ø-lepe* *nga* *Duwai* *Ken*
 house REL-3SG-be.big H.GEN uncle K.
 ‘Uncle Ken’s big house’ [Year1Readers9.Ref004]

An example of an anthropomorphised animal acting as a personal noun is shown in example (8.7). In this example, a duck acts as the possessor of its baby with the possessive marker *ya*.

- (8.7) *paipi* *ya* *Taktak*
 baby H.GEN duck
 ‘baby of duck’ [vnm20-ninde.wav 2.888 15.524]

Typically, animals are common nouns and possession of their young is shown through the genitive *nene*, as in example (8.8).

- (8.8) *paipi* *nene* *Nanpopou*
 baby NHUM.GEN caterpillar
 ‘baby of caterpillar’ [Year2Readers4.Ref008]

Beyond possession, personal nouns can also be modified by the anaphoric *ka*. This construction comes from a story after one participant asked the location of *Susi*. Stories, in particular, often utilise the anaphoric reference marker after nouns. In this excerpt, the anaphoric *nge* is referencing the character *Susi* from the larger story.

- (8.9) *Susi ka Ø-tokh le nowoi.*
 S. ANA 3SG-stay LOC river
 ‘Susi is at the river.’ [Story8.Ref002]

8.1.3 Personal Interrogative *nane*

Personal nouns, whether prototypical personal nouns or anthropomorphised common nouns, answer the interrogative *nane* ‘who’.

- (8.10) **Interrogative Gloss**
Nane? ‘Who’s that?’
Nane ya? ‘Who’s that over there?’
Nane ge? ‘Who’s this (PROX)?’

See §4.5.7 for more examples of *nane*.

8.1.4 Kin Terms

Kin terms form a separate subclass from other personal nouns. Unlike other personal nouns, they are able to be directly possessed.

Below is a list of commonly attested Ninde kin terms repeated from (8.1b).

(8.11)	Kin Term	Gloss
	<i>mamam</i>	‘mum’
	<i>tatai</i>	‘dad’
	<i>bubum</i>	‘grandfather’
	<i>nesum</i>	‘grandmother’
	<i>duwai</i>	‘uncle’
	<i>sapoi</i>	‘aunt’
	<i>kala</i>	‘friend, brother’

The following list shows elicited kin terms. These do not occur in the corpus in texts or audio files.

(8.12)	Kin Term	Gloss
	<i>tamthapo</i>	‘uncle’
	<i>tatalou</i>	‘uncle, younger?’
	<i>nathang</i>	‘sister’
	<i>tuam tlepe</i>	‘older brother’
	<i>sung loulou</i>	‘younger brother’

Example (8.13a) shows the directly possessed kin term for ‘grandmother’, while example (8.13b) shows the directly possessed form of *kala* ‘friend’.

(8.13a) *nesu-ng*
 grandmother-1POSS
 ‘my grandmother’

(8.13b) *kala-ne niye*
 friend-3SG 3SG
 ‘his (close) friend, brother’

Possession is shown both through the direct possession suffixes, and the following independent pronoun in (8.13b).

§7.4.1 discusses direct possession in further detail.

8.1.5 *Nouns that fit two classes*

Some nouns are able to act as *both* a common noun and a personal noun, though not simultaneously. Therefore, nouns able to span two noun classes can act as either a personal or common noun. Both animals and general person/kin terms act in this way.

Animals typically fall in the category of common nouns, meaning their genitive relationships are shown with the genitive *nene*, as in example (8.14a).

(8.14a) *tatai nene kairate*
 father NHUM.GEN rat
 ‘the father of the rat’ [Year3Readers3.Ref016]

However, when animals take on human characteristics, they are able to act as personal nouns. This is illustrated in example (8.14b), where *kairate* ‘rat’ grammatically follows the possessor *a*, reserved for personal nouns. Semantically, the rat is taking on human characteristics by getting married.

- (8.14b) *lepowokh a kairate.*
 girl H.GEN rat
 ‘Rat’s girl. (as in girlfriend, not daughter)’ [Year3Readers3.Ref017]

General terms for people like *lepowokh* ‘girl’ and *boi* ‘child’ act as common nouns. Example (8.15) shows *lepowokh* ‘girl’ followed by both a relative clause and a quantifier, both of which are modifiers taken only by common nouns.

- (8.15) *lepowokh t-Ø-loulou tuwa*
 girl REL-3SG-be.small INDF
 ‘a small girl’ Lt. ‘a girl that is small’ [Year3Reader3.Ref002]

However, if *lepowokh* ‘girl’ is used in the sense of ‘my girl’ or ‘daughter, granddaughter’ it can act as a kin term and, therefore, a personal noun. Example (8.16) shows the term *lepowokh* filling the syntactic position of possessor, a position reserved for personal nouns. This example is taken from a story where the girl’s relationship to her grandmother is an integral part of the story.

- (8.16) *nu-ruwokh-yene nga lepowokh*
 NOM1-thought-NOM2 H.GEN girl
 ‘granddaughter’s thoughts’ [Year3Readers5.Ref024]

8.2 Local Nouns

Local nouns include a series of nouns that encode spatial meaning. The class of local nouns is comprised of geographical locations (8.17a) and familiar places (8.17b). Neither of the lists below is exhaustive. Both sets of local nouns encode a locative-type meaning (in/to/at) . They do not require a preposition.

The list of familiar places (8.17b) are related to a series of common nouns. Their surface forms differ only in the initial consonant: where common nouns are *n*-initial, local nouns are *l*-initial.

(8.17a)	Local Noun ³⁹	Gloss		
	<i>oute</i>	‘(LOC) shore’		
	<i>ami</i>	‘(LOC) village’		
(8.17b)	Local Noun	Gloss	Common Noun	Gloss
	<i>lami</i> ⁴⁰	‘(LOC) house, inside’	<i>nami</i>	‘house’
	<i>lasogonei</i>	‘(LOC) bush’	<i>nasogonei</i>	‘bush’
	<i>lowoi</i>	‘(LOC) river’	<i>nowoi</i>	‘river’
	<i>lakhaine</i>	‘(LOC) garden’	<i>nakhaine</i>	‘garden’

All forms listed are also found with [ð] as the initial phone, which seems to be an allophone of /l/⁴¹. The origin of the initial [l] of most local nouns is likely related to the general locative *le(le)*.

Local nouns can be described as possessing the following characteristics:

- Local nouns may be encoded as the oblique object of intransitive verbs without any additional morphology;
- Local nouns require a preposition in transitive constructions;
- Local nouns cannot be replaced by an independent pronoun

While local nouns can be encoded as obliques in intransitive constructions without any additional morphology, common and personal nouns require

³⁹ Initially *wokhtes* ‘(LOC) beach’ was included in the list of local nouns, however it has since been removed due to ambiguity. It can also (and is currently) analysed as *wokh (ne)tes* ‘DIR ocean’.

⁴⁰ While the local noun *ami* ‘village’ is attested, the form *lami* is the local form of the common noun *nami* ‘house’. All three forms *ami* ‘village’, *nami* ‘house’ and *lami* ‘LOC.house’ are likely related.

⁴¹ See fn.12 on p. 28.

additional morphology (i.e. a preposition) to fill the oblique position. The following examples illustrate this property.

- (8.18a) *Niye Ø-we thakhaine.*
 3SG 3SG-go to.garden
 ‘She is going to the garden.’ [Story15.Ref002]

- (8.18b) *Nakha re-wul oute.*
 3PL 3PL-come.together LOC.shore
 ‘They came together at the shore.’ [Year3Readers6.Ref006]

- (8.18c) *Bubum Kalua Ø-tho lasogonei.*
 grandfather K. 3SG-go to.bush
 ‘Grandfather Kalua went to the bush.’ [Year2Readers1.Ref005]

- (8.18d) *Kamem e-yaqdep ami.*
 1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL-arrive LOC.village
 ‘We arrived at the village.’ [Year3Readers.Ref038]

The second characteristic local nouns require a preposition in transitive constructions. Although ditransitive constructions are unattested in the Ninde corpus, if a local noun appears in a transitive construction, it is preceded by a preposition – most often *p(V)*- ‘to’.

The following examples show local nouns marked with the *p(V)*- prefix in transitive clauses.

- (8.19a) *Nepme netes re-subrou string nga niye p-oute.*
 wave ocean 3PL-toss string H.GEN 3SG to-shore
 ‘The waves tossed his string to shore.’ [Year2Readers7.Ref010]

(8.19b) *Na-yel bokhmen a këne p-lasogonei.*
 1SG-carry dog H.GEN 1SG to-bush
 ‘I carried my dog to the bush.’ [dead.dog.Ref002]

(8.19c) *Re-yel nge p-ami.*
 3PL-carry 3SG.O.INAN to-house
 ‘They carried it to the house.’ [Year2Readers1.Ref025]

8.2.1 Directional Nouns

Directional local nouns encode a locational direction rather than to/at/in a particular place. Hyslop (2001, 52) describes directional nouns in the Lolovoli dialect of Ambae by saying, “the primary distinction made by the directionals is an absolute distinction, and these forms are marked to specify direction relative to the participants in the speech act”. Barbour (2012, 95) describes a similar set of nouns in the Central Malekula language of Nerverver as absolute/deictic nouns, because they are “absolute in the sense of referring consistently to a particular direction [and] deictic in that they are bound to the speaker’s point of view.’ Like Nerverver, the points of view of other participants are not encoded in Ninde.

While directional local nouns grammatically act as other local nouns, they are distinct in that they can be used in relative clauses by taking the relativiser *t-* (§7.2). When used in this way, they can only modify common nouns.

(8.20) Local Noun	Gloss
<i>erei</i>	‘upward’
<i>thatane</i>	‘downward’
<i>liwene</i>	‘middle’
<i>khaiwe</i>	‘uphill, far’
<i>aqat</i>	‘up’

Example (8.21a) illustrates the local noun *erei* affixed with the special relativiser *t-* in order to modify the common noun *nami* ‘house’.

- (8.21a) *nami t-erei*
house REL-upward
‘the house that is up there’ Lt. ‘house that is upward’ [Story6.Ref011]

Examples (8.21b) and (8.21c) show *erei*, the same directional noun, behaving as other local nouns do. (8.21b) shows *erei* encoded as the locational oblique, while (8.21c) shows it affixed with the preposition *p(V)*- ‘to’.

- (8.21b) *Niye Ø-thogote erei kha nei.*
3SG 3SG-walk upward on tree
‘He walked up on the tree.’ [broken.axe.Ref003]

- (8.21c) *Na-wokhoi nge p-erei.*
1SG-pull 3SG.O.INAN to-up
‘I pulled it up.’ [Year3Readers1.Ref016]

The usage of local nouns in relative clauses is further explained in §7.2.2.

8.2.2 Temporal Nouns

A second subclass of local nouns are local nouns of time. These temporal markers differ from common nouns that encode temporal value, because they can act as adverbial adjuncts without the temporal preposition *tkhait* or general locative *le*. Like other local nouns, they encode locational information, though temporal in nature.

(8.22)	<i>tlobuge</i>	‘(LOC).yesterday’
	<i>kēsakh</i>	‘(LOC).today, now’
	<i>makhan</i>	‘(LOC).tomorrow’
	<i>midumkho</i>	‘(LOC).morning’
	<i>wenelēs</i>	‘(LOC).midday’
	<i>thakhap</i>	‘(LOC).afternoon’
	<i>liwete</i>	‘(LOC).night’

Examples (8.23), (8.24) and (8.25) show various temporal local nouns acting as adverbial adjuncts without a preposition.

(8.23)	<i>Midumkho,</i>	<i>nalasne</i>	<i>niye</i>	<i>Ø-golou</i>	<i>lis.</i>
	in.morning	sun	3SG	3SG-wake.up	again
	‘In the morning, the sun woke up again.’ [Year2Readers6.Ref022]				

(8.24)	<i>Liwete,</i>	<i>niswakha</i>	<i>re-yele.</i>
	at.night	k.o.bird	3PL-fly
	‘At night, (k.o.) birds fly.’ [Year2Readers5.Ref008]		

(8.25)	<i>Tlobuge,</i>	<i>kēne</i>	<i>duwan</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>kēne</i>	<i>kamem</i>
	yesterday	1SG	COM	H.GEN	1SG	1PL.EXCL
	<i>e-we</i>	<i>wokh</i>	<i>tes.</i>			
	1PL.EXCL-go	DIR	beach			
	‘Yesterday, my family and I went to the beach.’ Lt. ‘Yesterday I family, we went to the beach.’ [Story3.Ref002]					

By contrast, examples (8.26) and (8.27) show the behaviour of a common noun *numkhoine* ‘day’. In order to act as an adverbial clause it needs to be preceded by

either *tkhait* ‘when’ (§5.2.3), while *numkhoine* as an adverbial phrase is preceded by the general locative *le* (§4.2.1).

- (8.26) *Tkhait numkhoine tuwa re-tho...*
 when day INDF 3PL-go
 ‘After some days passed...’ [Year2Readers4.Ref007]

- (8.27) *Le numokhoine t-Ø-laq...*
 LOC day REL-3SG-be.more
 ‘The next day...’ [Year3Readers8.Ref047]

Example (8.28) shows the temporal local nouns *lakhan* and *liwete* encoded as obliques, behaving as typical local nouns.

- (8.28) *Nathai Ø-su~sukhop lakhan ma liwete.*
 wind 3SG-DUP~blow in.day and in.night
 ‘The wind blew all day and night.’ Lt. ‘The wind blew (HAB) in the day and in the night.’ [vnm06-ninde.wav 14.507 20.097]

Local nouns of time are also attested alongside ordinal numbers.

- (8.29) *Midubkho we-sei, pusuwokh sei Ø-wus nanikot.*
 in.morning ORD-one boy one 3SG-tie.up goat
 ‘One morning, a boy tied up a goat.’ Lt. ‘In the morning once, one boy tied up a goat.’ [vnm10-ninde.wav 41.613 52.099]

Example (8.30) shows the same ordinal *wesei* modifying the temporal local noun *liwete* ‘night’ to encode that the event that follows happened ‘one night’.

- (8.30) *We-sei liwete, tkhait na-mětokh,*
 ORD-one at.night when 1SG-sleep

[ye nathaikhap Ø-khupnəs nami a kěne.]

then cyclone 3SG-blow house H.GEN 1SG

‘One night while I was sleeping, a cyclone blew my house.’ Lt. ‘Once at night when I was sleeping then a cyclone blew my house.’ [vnm19-ninde.wav 17.504 25.474]

8.3 Scope for further investigation

The noun phrase was the primary focus of this project, but its coverage is by no means exhaustive. The variation between typical relative clauses (§7.2) and those formed from directional local nouns (§7.2.2) warrants further exploration due to their varying positions within the noun phrase. Although, as stated in fn.29 (p.147), local nouns may be acting as non-verbal predicates in a relative clause.

Ninde direct possession (§7.4.1) appears to be mid-transition. Further research consisting of a wider corpus from a larger range of speakers from various villages can provide further insight into this topic.

Demonstrative pronouns were introduced in section §7.3.1. While there are clear attestations in the corpus of the proximate demonstrative pronoun, they are very limited. There are no instances of the distal demonstrative pronoun in the corpus. Further evidence would strengthen the analysis of these lexemes.

Contact with Bislama has appeared to have an impact on the Ninde language, including in common noun marking (§7.1). Again, a larger corpus from a wider geographic area can provide more insight into this topic, as well as other areas Bislama is influencing the language.

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Appendix A: Ethical Approval

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Jean (Schwartz) Murray
Dr Julie Barbour

Applied Linguistics

20 November 2015

Dear Jean

Re: **FS2015-36 Ninde: topics in nominal and verbal morphology**

Thank you for sending me your amendments. You have addressed all the points in my previous letter and I am happy to provide you with formal ethical approval.

I wish you well with your research.

Kind regards,

Ruth Walker
Chair

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee.

Appendix B: Sample Texts

Sample Text One: Making Laplap [Ninde_laplap]

This is the beginning of a conversation between Ruby and Leina Isno. Ruby is describing the process of making laplap (specifically laplap taro), while Leina asks questions. Occasionally the two speak over each other, shown in example (12). The two speakers are shown as (12a): Ruby and (12b): Leina.

- (6) *takh-p-yokh* *niyo* *nene* *nathai.*

1DU.INCL-FUT-make laplap NHUM.GEN taro

‘We will make laplap taro.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 56.504 59.175]

- (7) *Niyo* *Ø-makhakho* *takh-p-yokh* *niyo*

laplap 3SG-be.folded 1DU.INCL-FUT-make laplap

Ø- makhakho

3SG-be.folded

‘Laplap that is folded, we will make laplap that is folded.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 59.175 62.711]

- (8) *Kitakh* *takh-khoda* *takh-p-yokh* *niyo*

1DU.INCL 1DU.INCL-want 1DU.INCL-FUT-make laplap

ka *takh-p-tho* *ka* *takh-p-golou* *neb,*

ANA 1DU.INCL-FUT-go ANA 1DU.INCL-FUT-gather firewood

takh-p-golou *nukhoi.*

1DU.INCL-FUT-gather leaf

‘If we want to make laplap, then we will go and gather firewood, and gather leaves.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 70.325 78.371]

- (9) *Takh-p-pakha* *nomoi*

1DU.INCL-FUT-take island.cabbage

‘We will take island cabbage.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 78.371 80.485]

- (10) *Takh-p-lip naqaine de takh-p-yokh niyo*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-get food what 1DU.INCL-FUT-make laplap
kha ne nathai.
 on 3SG taro
 ‘We will get food especially to make on this laplap taro.’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 80.485 84.369]
- (11) *Takh-p-pal pul ami.*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-take come LOC.village
 ‘We will bring it home/to the village.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 84.369 87.517]
- (12a) *Ka Takh-p-yokh takh-p-khakhoi nathai*
 DISC.INT 1DU.INCL-FUT-do 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate taro
- (12b) *a kitakh Takh-gëlēm luwo mun nathai*
 H.GEN 1DU.INCL 1DU.INCL-peel before taro
metakhke
 first
 (12a): ‘Then we grate our taro.’
 (12b): ‘We will peel the taro skins first...’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 87.517 95.026]
- (13) *ka gobakha ka tak-p-khakhoi nge.*
 DISC.INT after ANA 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate 3SG.O.INAN
 ‘...then after that, we will grate it.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 95.026 97.819]
- (14) *Takh-p-khokhoi nge kha de ya?*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate 3SG.O.INAN INST what DISC
 ‘What will we grate it with?’ Lt. ‘We will grate it with what?’
 [Ninde_laplap.wav 97.819 99.465]
- (15) *Nëbulyete.*
 laplap.grater
 ‘Laplap grater.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 99.465 101.263]

- (16) *Takh-p-khokhoi* *nge* *kha* *nëbulyete*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate 3SG.O.INAN INST laplap.grater
 ‘We will grate it with a laplap grater.’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 101.263 103.103]
- (17) *Takh-p-khokhoi* *nge* *ple* *nëbulyete* *ka...*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate 3SG.O.INAN into laplap.grater ANA
- takh-p-khokhoi* *nge* *kha* *nëbulyete* *ka,*
 1DU.INCL-FUT-grate 3SG.O.INAN INST laplap.grater ANA
- nathai* *Ø-p-tho* *pe* *mene?*
 taro 3SG-FUT-go to where
 ‘We will grate it into the laplap grater....we will grate it with the laplap grater,
 where will it go to?’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 105.475 112.478]
- (18) *p-lele* *nukhoi*
 into leaf
 ‘into leaves’ [Ninde_laplap.wav 112.478 116.13]

Sample Text Two: Last Weekend [Ninde_weekend past]

This excerpt is taken from the middle of a conversation between Leina & Ruby Isno. In it, Leina asks Ruby about what she and her husband (Peter Isno) did during the previous weekend.

- (14) *Ga mkhoine wes ka kite te-yokh de?*
 PROX day four ANA 1PL.INCL 1PL.INCL-do what
 ‘Last Thursday, what did we do?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 93.164 97.103]

- (15) *Kamokh ka-yokh de tkhait na-tokh lele nakhaine*
 2DU 2DU-do what when 1SG-stay LOC work

ka? Kamokh ka-yokh de?
 ANA 2DU 2DU-do what
 ‘What did you (two) do when I was at work? You (two) did what?’
 [Ninde_weekend past.wav 97.103 100.767]

- (16) *Kamakh ka ka-kokh ye këne na-kha*
 1DU.EXCL ANA 1DU.EXCL-stay then 1SG 1SG-work

nesogonei.
 grass
 ‘We both stayed and I worked the grass/weeds.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 100.767 106.205]

- (17) *Tatai a nug ka Ø-kēl netene, gom*
 dad H.GEN 2SG ANA 3SG-dig.out ground ?

i Ø-yokh maqas netene yakha maqas nakha
 PART 3SG-do well ground all well 3PL

kokh.
 stay
 ‘Your dad dug out the soil, then arranged the all the soil well.’
 [Ninde_weekend past.wav 106.205 116.884]

- (18) *E-was~was* *me* *netene?*
 1PL.EXCL-DUP~wash just ground
 ‘Did he just wash the ground?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 116.884 120.041]
- (19) *Ø-lěp* *nowoi* *ye* *Ø-was...* *Ø-swoi* *netene*
 3SG-take water then 3SG-wash 3SG-splash ground

kha *ne.*
 INST 3SG
 ‘He took water then washed...splashed the ground with it.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 120.041 124.107]
- (20) *Ø-swoi* *netene?*
 3SG-splash ground
 ‘He splashed the ground?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 124.107 127.031]
- (21) *Ye* *gom* *i* *Ø-kho* *milēm* *ye* *Ø-we* *mitokh.*
 then ? PART 3SG-SENSE tired then 3SG-go sleep
 ‘Then he felt tired, then we went to sleep.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 127.031 133.34]
- (22) *Kēne* *ka* *na-kha* *luwo* *ye* *ka* *tho*
 1SG ANA 1SG-work DUR then ANA go

swoi *ye* *ka* *we* *deden.*
 splash then ANA go swim
 ‘I kept working, then went to wash, then went to swim.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 133.34 141.109]
- (23) *Ka* *nug=sēm* *me* *nesogonei?*
 DISC.INT 2SG=chop just grass
 ‘Did you cut the grass?’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 141.109 143.25]
- (24) *Mmmm*
 [yes]
 ‘Yes.’ [Ninde_weekend past.wav 143.25 144.14]

- (25) *Nug=sēm nesogonei ye ku-yokh de kha nesogonei.*
2SG=chop grass then 2SG-do what INST grass
'You cut the grass, then you did what with the grass?' [Ninde_weekend past.wav
144.14 146.366]

Sample Text Three: Butterflies [Year2Readers4]

This text has no corresponding audio, but is the translation of a school reader. The original set of readers from this series are written in Bislama. The translations were collected from local Ninde primary school teachers. This particular reader discusses the lifecycle of butterflies.

(8) *Paepi nene nanapopou kho re-tusetokh lele*
 baby NHUM.GEN caterpillar PL 3PL-emerge LOC

namathap ne nakha ka re-yen
 egg NHUM.GEN 3PL ANA 3PL-eat

nuwokho nei.
 leaf tree

‘Baby caterpillars emerge from their egg and they eat the leaf.’

[Year2Readers4.Ref008]

(9) *Nakha re-kaqan nap ye re-tlepe.*
 3PL 3PL-eat very then 3PL-be.big

‘They eat a lot then are big.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref009]

(10) *Nakha re-tlepe mukse ras, ye yakh wut*
 3PL 3PL-be.big hurry very then ? SUB

re-mul.

3PL-shed.skin

‘They are big quickly, then shed their skin.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref010]

(11) *Nakha re-mul wa-khuwo ai we- tēl.*
 3PL 3PL-shed.skin ADV-2 or ADV-3

‘They shed their skin twice or thrice.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref011]

- (12) *Numkhoine tuwa re-tho ka nakha re-s-tlepe*
 day INDF 3PL-go ANA 3PL 3PL-NEG1-be.big
sëk wei wutde.
 NEG.CONT NEG2 amount
 ‘After some days, they go until they are no bigger.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref012]
- (13) *Nakha re-p-golo wokh nesakh de nakha*
 3PL 3PL-FUT-look DIR place what 3PL
rep-dagalgäl kha ne.
 3PL-FUT-hang on 3SG
 ‘They look for a place where they will hang (on it).’ [Year2Readers4.Ref013]
- (14) *Nanpopou ngekho re-yokh nede tu-Ø-weisesakha*
 caterpillar DIST.PL 3PL-make basket REL-3SG-be.strong
nga nakha te nakha re-p-kokh thathaq
 H.GEN 3PL REL 3PL 3PL-FUT-stay DIM
lele wut lele.
 LOC SUB LOC
 ‘Those caterpillars make their strong basket that they hide in.’
 [Year2Readers4.Ref014]
- (15) *Wut lele nede tu-Ø-weisesakha nge nakha*
 SUB LOC basket REL-3SG-be.strong DIST 3PL
re-mul ye wi netnowokh nalpepe.
 3PL-shed.skin then COP child butterfly
 ‘In the strong basket, they shed their skin then are young butterflies.’
 [Year2Readers4.Ref015]

- (16) *Tkhait nakha re-tlepe maqas, ka nakha*
 when 3PL 3PL-be.big well ANA 3PL
re-tik-pokh nede tu-Ø-weisesakha nge.
 3PL-punch-break basket REL-3SG-be.strong DIST
 ‘When they are big, they break out of the strong basket.’
 [Year2Reader4.Ref016]

- (17) *Ye nakha re-tetes nelwakha nakha ye*
 then 3PL 3PL-open wing 3PL then
wiya ka nakha re-yepyp te
 now ANA 3PL 3PL-get.ready REL
re-p-yele~yele.
 3PL-FUT-DUP~fly
 ‘Then they open their wings, and now their get ready to fly.’
 [Year2Readers4.Ref017]

- (18) *Nalpepe gekho re-yele saq makhsu.*
 butterfly PROX.PL 3PL-fly PFV everywhere
 ‘The butterflies flew everywhere.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref018]

- (19) *Nakha re-yele lou nitiwe nei kho maq nei*
 3PL 3PL-fly over flower tree PL and tree
kho
 PL
 ‘They flew over flowers and trees.’ [Year2Readers4.Ref019]

- (20) *Nakha re-spo soq re- mën nowoi ne*
 3PL 3PL-sit CONJ 3PL-drink water NHUM.GEN

niwitwe nei kho.

flower tree PL

‘They sat down and drank nectar (from flowers).’

[Year2Readers4.Ref020]

Sample Text Four: Why the Mosquito Harms People [Year3Readers9]

This story has no corresponding audio, but is the translation of a traditional Malekula story. In this excerpt, a man and mosquito play hide and seek.

- (7) *We-sei nudukas Ø-wusuwokh tele boiwakh tuwa*
 ADV-1 mosquito 3SG-ask OBL boy.PL INDF

Ø-ti “Kitakh takh-kholagre me takh-sogokho
 3SG-say 1DU.INCL 1DU.INCL-can just 1DU.INCL-play

tokh thathaq? Këne na-p-tokh thathaq metakhke.

hide 1SG 1SG-FUT-hide before

‘One time, mosquito asked some boys, ‘We can play hide and seek? I will hide first.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref007]

- (8) *Gakh nge Ø-gade ye nudukas Ø-yele ye*
 man DIST 3SG-shut.eyes then mosquito 3SG-fly then

Ø-we tokh thathaq wene nuwokhoi tuwa. Yete
 3SG-go hide under leaf INDF After.that

Ø-wurou ye Ø-ti, “Nug=s-kholagre wei
 3SG-call.out then 3SG-say 2SG=NEG1-can NEG2

ku-p-li këne! Ku-p-golou ka
 2SG-FUT-see 1SG 2SG-FUT-open.eyes ANA

ku-p-golo wokh këne!”
 2SG-FUT-look DIR 1SG

‘The man shut his eyes, then the mosquito flew and hid underneath a leaf. After that, he called out, “You can’t see me! Open your eyes and find me!”’

- (9) *Gakh nge Ø-wokh rukha nele nudukas nge, ye*
 man DIST 3SG-follow voice mosquito DIST then

Ø-golo wokh niye makhsu.
 3SG-look DIR 3SG everywhere

‘He followed the mosquito’s voice and looked for him everywhere.’

[Year3Readers9.Ref009]

- (10) *Nudukas Ø-wurou lis ye Ø-ti,*
 mosquito 3SG-call.out again then 3SG-say

“Nug=s-kholagre wei ku-p-li këne!
 2SG=NEG1-can NEG2 2SG-FUT-see 1SG

Ku-p-golou ka ku-p-golo wokh këne!”
 2SG-FUT-open.eyes ANA 2SG-FUT-look DIR 1SG

‘Mosquito called out again saying, “You can’t see me! Open your eyes and look for me!”’ [Year3Readers9.Ref010]

- (11) *Gakh nge Ø-kho~kho maqas soq Ø-golo*
 man DIST 3SG-DUP~listen well CONJ 3SG-look

wokh nudukas wene nowokho nei. Nudukas
 DIR mosquito under leaf tree mosquito

Ø-yele p-erei ye gakh nge Ø-li
 3SG-fly to-up then man DIST 3SG-see

nelwakha niye tuwa re-gil~gilan ye
 wing 3SG INDF 3PL-DUP~be.beautiful then

Ø-yel tu~tu nge.
 3SG-carry DUP-put 3SG.O.INAN

‘The man listened well and looked for the mosquito under the leaf. The mosquito flew up, then the man saw its beautiful wings then caught him.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref011]

- (12) *Na-spokh nug! Wiya ka tkhait na-p-tokh thathaq*
 1SG-catch 2SG now ANA when 1SG-FUT-hide

suwo.

?

‘I caught you! Now it’s time for me to hide.’ [Year3Readers9.Ref012]

- (13) *Gakh nge Ø-tho thasogonei ye Ø-tokh thathaq*
 man DIST 3SG-go LOC.bush then 3SG-hide

lele nagkhawane nebage ye Ø-wurou...
 LOC k.o.tree then 3SG-call.out

‘The man went to the bush, then hid in a banyan tree, then called out...’
 [Year3Readers9.Ref013]

- (14) “*Nug=s-kholagre wei ku-p-li këne!*”
 2SG=NEG1-can NEG2 2SG-FUT-see 1SG

Ku-p-golou ka ku-p-golo wokh këne.”
 2SG-FUT-open.eyes ANA 2SG-FUT-look DIR 1SG

“‘You can’t see me! Open your eyes and look for me!’”
 [Year3Readers9.Ref014]

- (15) *Nudukas ka Ø-li luwaq niye ye Ø-yele*
 mosquito ANA 3SG-see DUR? 3SG then 3SG-fly

pe niye ye Ø-ti “Nug ge!
 to 3SG then 3SG-say 2SG PROX

Na-li lagu sepme nug.”
 1SG-see fast LIM 2SG

‘The mosquito saw him, then he flew to him then said “You’re here! I saw you quickly!’” [Year3Readers9.Ref015]

(16) *Gakh nge Ø-ti, “Nug=yakh pelawas kha këne.*
man DIST 3SG-say 2SG=? bad on 1SG

Nug=tokh sepme te ku-li wokh këne.
2SG=stay LIM REL 2SG-see DIR 1SG

‘The man said, You ??, you stayed to look at me.’”

[Year3Readers9.Ref016]

Appendix C: Files

The first table includes the list of text files in the corpus, while the second table shows the text files with corresponding audio files.

File Name	Title	Date	Speaker
Bad.Dog	A dog behaves badly	2014	Leina Isno
Broken.Axe	A boy breaks an axe	2014	Leina Isno
Conch.Shell	A conch shell	2014	Leina Isno
Dead.Dog	A dog is dead	2014	Leina Isno
Story 1	I can read	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 2	I like food	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 3	My family	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 4	How is it?	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 5	Animals	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 6	What is soft? What is hard?	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 7	Loose tooth	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 8	T-shirts	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 9	Chickens	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 10	Uncle's Truck	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 11	My house	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 12	Legs	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong

Story 13	In the garden	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 14	In the sea	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 15	Where are they going?	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 16	What are they doing?	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 17	At the clothing store	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 18	Ants and lizards	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 19	Big and little	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 20	What has wheels?	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 21	In the sky	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 22	What is it?	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 23	Where are they?	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Story 24	Come with us	2015	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year1Reader1	Duck Island	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year1Reader2	Ben tried walking	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year1Reader3	Why Ari hid on the beach	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year1Reader4	Corn	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year1Reader5	I can sing	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year1Reader6	Papa went fishing	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong

Year1Reader7	Leitau's small turtle	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year1Reader8	A tree inside a bottle	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year1Reader9	A good builder	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year2Reader1	Grandfather Kalua and the big, black snake	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year2Reader2	My rooster	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year2Reader3	Natapoa	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year2Reader4	Butterflies	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year2Reader5	Fancy parrots	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year2Reader6	White hibiscus and the sun	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year2Reader7	A big surprise	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year2Reader8	A big taro	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader9	Small girl Sawan	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader1	Look before you dive	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader2	The story of Tolamb Atoll	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader3	The strongest husband	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader4	Die laughing	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader5	The first Nakavika	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader6	How they found the hold in the stone at Valeva	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong

Year3Reader7	Cyclone Nigel	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader8	December wind	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
Year3Reader9	Why the mosquito harms people: A story from Malekula	2016	Anniely Kaitip & Jenery Kambong
pers. comm. 2.18	Nane	2018	Anniely Kaitip

File Name	Title	Date	Length	Speakers
Ninde_laplap	Making Laplap	2014	11.24 mins	Leina Isno, Ruby Isno
Ninde_last weekend	Last Weekend	2014	19 secs	Leina Isno
vnm01-ninde	Conch shell	2014	50 secs	Leina Isno
vnm02-ninde	Three cats	2014	1.09 mins	Leina Isno
vnm03-ninde	Setoko drinks water	2014	1.18 mins	Leina Isno
vnm04-ninde	Flying fox and snake	2014	34 secs	Leina Isno
vnm05-ninde	The fish that was laughing at the cat	2014	35 secs	Leina Isno
vnm06-ninde	Chicken feather	2014	39 secs	Leina Isno
vnm07-ninde	Peter made jam	2014	48 secs	Leina Isno
vnm08-ninde	Spider made his house	2014	50 secs	Leina Isno
vnm09-ninde	The rat and the bird	2014	35 secs	Leina Isno
vnm10-ninde	The white man and the goat	2014	1.09 mins	Leina Isno
vnm11-ninde	Ant fell into the river	2014	1.02 mins	Leina Isno
vnm12-ninde	Kal worked in his garden	2014	1.06 mins	Leina Isno
vnm13-ninde	Cat and Dog	2014	56 secs	Leina Isno
vnm14-ninde	Setoko's Truck	2014	40 secs	Leina Isno
vnm15-ninde	The old man and the rat	2014	1.17 mins	Leina Isno
vnm16-ninde	The brothers' bananas	2014	45 secs	Leina Isno
vnm17-ninde	Froggy and friends	2014	36 secs	Leina Isno
vnm19-ninde	My house	2014	37 secs	Leina Isno

vnm20-ninde	A duck	2014	53 secs	Leina Isno
vnm21-ninde	Milo can sing	2014	1.02 mins	Leina Isno
vnm22-ninde	Good food	2014	1.00 mins	Leina Isno
vnm23-ninde	Tom	2014	1.03 mins	Leina Isno
vnm24-ninde	A small boat	2014	32 secs	Leina Isno
vnm25-ninde	They cooked under a tree	2014	1.00 mins	Leina Isno
vnm26-ninde	Black and cat	2014	44 secs	Leina Isno
vnm27-ninde	An offshore island	2014	55 secs	Leina Isno
vnm28-ninde	Pawpaw	2014	58 secs	Leina Isno
vnm29-ninde	The gecko and the parrot	2014	36 secs	Leina Isno
Ninde_weekend past	Past weekend	2014	14.06 mins	Ruby Isno, Leina Isno
mwi_361	Nane ya?	2014	1 sec	Leina Isno
mwi_362	Nane kho ya?	2014	1 sec	Leina Isno